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Worship Service in Gumburdo, Akhalkalak
(Story Page 15)



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A Look in the AMAA Mirror

By **Zaven Khanjian**, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

Once again, the AMAA is at the threshold of a Centennial. A year after the celebration of our founding, it's time to convene AMAA's 100th Annual Meeting in the State where it was founded in 1918, the State of Massachusetts.

Our Board and Annual Meetings on October 18 and 19, 2019 will be hosted by the Armenian Memorial Church (AMC) of Watertown, MA. A celebratory Banquet honoring AMAA's deliverer, the Armenian Evangelical Church, is under meticulous planning by a Committee masterfully Co-Chaired by John and Michele Simourian. A special commemorative pilgrimage to the Armenian Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, MA, where the AMAA was founded, will follow the Sunday morning installation service at AMC. A milestone celebration is in the works and you are all invited to join us.

All annual meetings are 'a look in the mirror' to evaluate goals of the mission, gauging achievements and shortcomings. This hallmark gathering is a time for us to stare in the mirror and evaluate a century of deliverance of what the founding fathers envisioned.

The prominent Armenian Evangelical scholar, minister, author, editor, AMAA founder and Executive Director, **Rev. Antranig A. Bedikian** summed up our vision at the founding session on June 7, 1918 as follows:

Today, we may not fully understand the significance of the proposed Missionary Association, but in the near future, I am sure, we will see the glory of the panorama of this organization. One of the avowed goals of this Association is to keep alive the Armenian Evangelical Church. God willing, with our material and spiritual support, we shall strengthen our churches in America, as well as those overseas.

One hundred AMAA Annual Meetings later, what do we see in the mirror? I'd like to pass the honor of a response to our AMAA Vice President, **Dr. Michael Voskian** who delivered this image at a devotional to the AMAA Board at its meeting in Paramus on July 20, 2019.

Has the AMAA Stayed True to Its Mission?

But thanks be to God, who are in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved. And among those who are perishing, a fragrance from death to death. But to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? We are not, like so many peddlers of God's word: but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, and the sight of God, we speak in Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

We are now approaching the 100th Anniversary of the first Annual Meeting of the AMAA. I thought it would be appropriate that we reflect upon our mission.



Dr. Michael Voskian, AMAA Vice President.

Our mission, according to our website, states the following, “to serve the physical and spiritual needs of our people both at home and overseas. To fulfill this worldwide mission, we maintain a range of educational, evangelistic, relief, social service, church and childcare ministries in 24 countries around the world.

I ask each of us to contemplate these words and to ponder— has the AMAA stayed true to its mission?

For the past 100 years, the AMAA has invested in people. We have invested in the material and spiritual lives of thousands of people, here and abroad. We have invested in thousands of people in the Armenian Evangelical churches. We have invested in the lives of ministers who have kept our churches alive. We have invested in the education of thousands of students. We have invested in the Christian education of our children and youth. We have invested in preparing and supporting ministers and Christian educators throughout the world. And we have invested in the lives of needy families and children.

So, over the past century, the AMAA has invested a lot of time, money, blood, sweat and tears, but have we been true to our mission?

My answer to this question is a resounding YES!

The AMAA has touched the lives and been a blessing to a countless number of people. Over the years, the evangelism, the churches, the mission projects, and the schools have grown. I am honored and proud to be a part of this wonderful organization.

So, if we agree that the AMAA has stayed true to our mission, the next question is, how do we ensure that we continue to be true to the mission?

I would like all of you to think about this...I think that the best way is to be involved. Encourage and promote others to be involved. Speak up at the meetings, volunteer to serve on committees, give of your time, effort, and yes, your money as best as you can.

In the modified words of our late President John F. Kennedy, “Ask not what the AMAA does for you, but what you can do for the AMAA. And may God bless the AMAA!”

Thank you, Dr. Voskian, for your reflection and challenge.

I ask, what do you see in the mirror?

If your answer to the question of loyalty to the mission, like Dr. Voskian, is a resounding YES, we thank you for being a partner and invite you to continue to be true to the mission for the next 100 AMAA Annual Meetings and beyond.

Please join us to look in the AMAA mirror together this October, as we humble ourselves and continue to emulate the Love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ among our people to the ends of the earth. □

SAVE *the* DATE

OCTOBER 17-19, 2019

BOSTON, MA



AMA'S 100TH ANNUAL MEETING & BANQUET
CELEBRATING THE GLOBAL ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
VISIT AMAA.ORG TO REGISTER, RSVP & FOR MORE INFO

Sent for a Mission

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. John 17:18

By Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian

The Bible teaches us that the church has five purposes, which are worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry (service) and mission (outreach). These purposes are significant to us because all five are vital and necessary for us to have a healthy and balanced spiritual life and maturity, ministry and witness. Here, we will consider the fifth purpose of the church: mission.

Jesus, in His priestly prayer, prayed to God, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). God sent Jesus to the world with a mission – with a calling to reach out to people near and far. Jesus, before He left for heaven, passed that mission on to His disciples and gave them a plan about how to accomplish it. He said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). He told them to start at home (“Jerusalem”), go to people like themselves (“Judea”), go to people that are around them (“Samaria”) and lastly, go to everyone else (“ends of the earth”). He did not leave anyone out and placed His great trust and confidence in the Holy Spirit to empower them to fulfill His mission.



It's important for us to understand that Jesus is not asking us to become His defense attorney nor does He want us to be His prosecutor going around judging people and their actions. He wants us to be His witnesses - to tell people what we have seen and experienced, share the wonderful ways He has touched our lives, blessed us, and impacted our life.

Ministry is primarily our service to others. It's when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the widow and the homeless. Mission is our outreach to those outside the church to let them hear that Jesus loves them and wants to share the Good News that God is willing to forgive them their sins, bless and impact their lives, and invite them to join and participate in His mission.

As Jesus' witnesses,

1. We must share with those in our world. God has done so much for us. We just need to share with others what He has and continues to do for us. We do not do it is because we think people are not interested in spiritual things. Gallup did a poll and found out that 65 million people in the US have no church home. Out of those 65 million, 34 million said they would attend a church, if someone asked them. More than half would say “yes” to an invitation to go to church with someone they knew.

2. We must dare to reach beyond our world. God's love compels us to move beyond our comfort zone. A dad took his son and three of his best friends to an amusement park. The dad would walk with the kids and when they came to a ride, he would hand out a ticket to his son and three friends. Another ride and another four tickets. When they got to a ride after lunch, however, there was a fifth hand reaching up for a ticket. It was a little boy who was kind of dirty and messy. The dad looked at the little boy and asked, “Why do you think you get a ticket?” The little boy said, “Your son told me that you were giving free tickets to all of his best friends. I am his newest best friend.” Don't you love that boy?

As Jesus' witnesses, our mission is to share the Good News with everyone! As God sent Jesus into the world, so does Jesus send us. We can respond by asking, “Who, me?” or “Why, me?” or choose to say, “Here I am, Lord. Send me!” What's our response to what God has and continues to do in and through our lives? ☐

**Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian is the Pastor of the Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown, MA.*

In Memoriam

Robert M. Morgenthau, Esq.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America is saddened to learn of the recent passing of Robert M. Morgenthau, Esq., United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York for nine years and Manhattan District Attorney for 35 years, and long-time friend and boss of AMAA Board member and Vice President Peter Kougasian, Esq. Mr. Morgenthau, part of a prominent New York political family for many generations, passed away on July 21, 2019 in New York City, a few days before his 100th Birthday.

"In the 40 years of our acquaintance, I got to know Mr. Morgenthau very well, and I can assure you that he was a very, very great man, was passionately devoted to the Armenian people and spoke at many Genocide commemorations over the years," said Mr. Kougasian. Mr. Kougasian, who served as an Assistant District Attorney under Mr. Morgenthau, was instrumental in securing Mr. Morgenthau as the guest speaker for the 91st AMAA Annual Meeting Banquet, held October 17, 2010 at the Hackensack Golf Club in Oradell, NJ.

Mr. Morgenthau was the grandson of Henry Morgenthau Sr., a lawyer and businessman, who became President Woodrow Wilson's Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913-16. He came to be identified as the most prominent American to speak out about the Armenian Genocide and his book "Ambassador Morgenthau's Story" remains one of the most historical documents about the Genocide and is still frequently cited by Genocide scholars. Henry and several other Americans formed a public fundraising committee to assist Armenians called the Committee on Armenian Atrocities (later renamed Near East Relief) which raised over \$100 million in aid. Through his friendship with the publisher of The New York Times, he ensured that the Genocide received prominent coverage in the paper; The Times published 145 articles about the Genocide in 1915 alone. Countless Armenian families recall how their "Uncle Henry" personally intervened to provide for their ancestor's safe settlement in America. Henry's image appeared in a 2015 Armenian postage stamp series called "Centennial of the Armenian Genocide."

Mr. Morgenthau's father, Henry Jr., served as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Treasury Secretary for much of the Depression and World War II. His biggest success was the Social Security Program; he reversed proposals to fund it from general revenue and insisted that it be funded by new taxes on employees.

Mr. Morgenthau served as a mentor to generations of public servants in politics and law. Under his leadership many notable Assistant District Attorneys served under him including the Hon. Sonia Sotomayor, Governor Andrew Cuomo, John F. Kennedy, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Cyrus Vance, Jr.

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, and his wife Sona were honored to meet Mr. Morgenthau at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, which he founded and later became Chairman. "We celebrate the long life of Mr. Morgenthau," said Mr. Khanjian. "While we are sad to lose such a great man, the bright side is that our Creator gains his company." □



Peter Kougasian, Esq., former AMAA Vice President with Robert M. Morgenthau, Esq. at the AMAA's 91st Annual Meeting Banquet at Hackensack Golf Club, Oradell, NJ.

Is Building Worth It?

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian

Wending our way through the narrow streets of Bourj Hammoud (just outside Beirut) this week, my son and I stopped at the shop of a childhood friend of Maria's. Usually when I pass by this fellow's tiny workplace he's busy at one of his sewing machines, assembling parts for shoes that are manufactured there.

Sometimes he's so focused he doesn't see me pass and I have to interrupt him to say "hello." And then he takes a break from his task to offer me a cup of coffee so we can chat. This is how it has been for decades for the Armenians of Bourj Hammoud, known in Lebanon as an industrious working class of shoe manufacturers, leather workers, jewelers, shopkeepers and the like.

Today, however, my friend was sitting on a chair outside his shop in the stifling summer humidity, watching people coming and going. "How are you?" I ask. "How should I be? There's no work." And he went on to describe how bad the economy has gotten, so much that the piecework that used to sustain him has dried up. "Our Armenian schools are closing, your church building will close, too; we'll be leaving all of our properties to others..." All I could do was listen in silence, because I had no magic formula to share, no guarantee to convince him that things will improve and a modicum of productivity and business would return. "All that's left for us (Armenians) is the sea. Each day we're drawing a little nearer to the sea... and then to other lands. It's not worth building anything here. But thank God, I'm still healthy."

"Not worth building anything"... yet wherever they have lived Armenians have been known as builders, appreciated even by their overlords, as they were the premiere architects of much of Ottoman Turkey's most magnificent structures. Yet now, as then, they are also beleaguered in their adopted lands in the Middle East, along with so many indigenous Christian groups. And they imagine that across the sea things might fare better for them. But in those far-away lands, too, there is no magic formula or guarantee of success. Though a productive life might await them in those lands, but alongside that life will also await the well-worn path of dissolution into the dominant culture.

Each day something in the news reminds us of how much the Holy Lands seem to awaken the appetites of far-away countries (and some that are near) to stoke the flames of unholy war in these lands. To live and work here one must ask, "Is it worth it?" Is it worth the struggle to build your life and homes in the Middle East, to continue to worship as Christians and serve in Jesus' name as a numerical minority, to press on with educating the younger generation in their faith and cultural heritage, to inculcate a sense of ownership of and belonging to that land?

As Maria and I toured various conferences in the United States in June on behalf of Global Ministries, we were tasked with presenting something of our work to the young and old of the churches that support us. It is a pleasant task to give others a glimpse into a world they might never visit, and establish a personal and specific connection with Global Ministries' work in so many places in the world. From the Southern

Conference of the UCC to the Alabama-NW Florida and Oklahoma Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we forged new friendships and invited especially the young people to consider spending a year or more in Christian service outside the confines of the United States, and not only help others, but also gain a broader perspective on the role of their own country in world affairs.

Yet I struggled to convey the bigger picture, and how difficult it is to bring hope to ordinary folk who question the efforts they expend year after year for the simple things like having work or breathing clean air or paying their electric bills or planning ahead to their families' future. "Is it worth it?" needs a direct answer, especially for the sake of young people here, who openly consider the wisest plan of action to be a plan to leave the country.

Is it worth it to give your time and energy to gather children off the streets into a church or social center for four to eight weeks for Vacation Bible School, as young people in the churches of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East do each summer in Syria, Lebanon, Greece and elsewhere? Is it worth it to develop long-range plans and international partnerships and scholarship funding to provide higher education to those of limited means, as Haigazian University does? Is it worth it to keep moving forward with renovation work and improvements in "KCHAG," the Union's conference grounds so that children can spend a week far from their crowded streets and closer to God? Is it worth it to invest material support to keep the church's educational ministry going, as the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) does? Is it worth it for Global Ministries and AMAA to stand behind the Near East School of Theology to prepare leaders who are ready to serve Jesus Christ in their stressed-out home countries? What is the metric one should use to decide what is worth investing your life in, and what is not worth it?

"A sower went to sow his seed" and although he scattered much, and there were many obstacles, he scattered far and wide anyway, for the sake of the seed that fell in good soil. The parable is about hearts that are ready to receive the Gospel, the Lord Jesus' Good News; but it is also about the faith of the sower. You invest your life in something you believe in, something that God points you to, and not just because it is safe. Yes, despite the myriad challenges, it is worth building here because God is the Master Builder, the Head of the harvest, and the Good Shepherd. We are the willing sowers, trusting the One who gives light – and rain – and soil in which to be grounded. □

** Rev. Nishan and Maria Bakalian are missionaries supported jointly by the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ, serving the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and the Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon. Your donations sustain the Bakalian mission in the Near East.*





Meet Our Veteran Pastors

Rev. Hovhannes (John) Melkonian

By Doris and Arda Melkonian

The name “Hovhannes,” derived from the Hebrew meaning “Yahweh is gracious,” encapsulates the unwavering promise of God’s favor and kindness. It is a promise of empowerment and of assurance. It is a promise of God’s everlasting presence. It is God’s gracious presence that is discerned in the life and ministry of the Rev. Hovhannes Melkonian.

Born to Mgrdich and Barkevouhi Melkonian, a deeply religious couple, Rev. Melkonian was the youngest of five sons. Nurtured by the love of his parents, young Hovhannes grew in the Word, and came to know the Lord at a tender age.

During his youth, Rev. Melkonian attended Aleppo College and Bethel Armenian Evangelical Church, where he discerned God’s call to enter the ministry. He attended Haigazian University and Near East School of Theology (NEST), receiving a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Theology, respectively. Upon graduation, Rev. Melkonian began his ministry in the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Kessab, Syria, followed by a pastorate in Anjar, Lebanon. Here, Rev. Melkonian served as Minister of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Anjar, as well as Vice Principal of the Armenian Evangelical Boarding School.

Rev. Melkonian married Jeanette Kouyoumjian, a respected and beloved English teacher in the Armenian Evangelical schools in Beirut. Together, they embraced the community of Anjar, and enthusiastically carried out God’s mission to further His kingdom. Their love for this community has had a long-lasting impact: to their congregation, they were the beloved pastor and pastor’s wife; and to many of their students, they became surrogate parents.

The graciousness of God was once again revealed to Rev. Melkonian as he was given the opportunity to further his education in the United States, a lifelong dream. Rev. Melkonian attended Pasadena Nazarene College (now Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego). Blessed with a warm personality, a

loving and kind heart, and a joyful disposition, Rev. Melkonian soon became a favorite on the university campus.

Upon graduating from Pasadena Nazarene College with a Master of Arts in Christian Education, Rev. Melkonian served as Associate Pastor in the First Church of the Nazarene, Pomona. His service in the Nazarene denomination expanded his thinking, exposed him to new ways of ministry and allowed him to thrive in this new setting. Several years later, this denomination that had become a source of great blessing in his life ordained Rev. Melkonian.

In addition to ministry, Rev. Melkonian pursued his second passion, teaching, by serving in American public schools. His commitment to education is reflected in his service at the Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School for many years as a member and Chairman of the Board. Additionally, he has served both his alma maters, as founding President of the Haigazian University Alumni Association in California, and as Treasurer of the NEST Alumni Association of North America. During this time, he filled empty pulpits in Armenian Evangelical churches, specifically the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena, CA. Upon retirement, Rev. Melkonian was called to serve as the interim Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Montreal, Canada.

Rev. Melkonian continues to preach the Word of God by serving as Chaplain of the United Armenian Congregational Church Men’s Fellowship and by leading Adult Sunday School at the Armenian Church of the Nazarene, Glendale, CA. He continues serving the Armenian community of Pasadena where he is fondly known as “the Badveli of Pasadena,” loved and respected by Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals alike for the kindness he shows to all indiscriminately.

God’s graciousness has been a hallmark in Rev. Melkonian’s life. As a recipient of God’s love and mercy, he has, in turn, freely extended it to all whom he has encountered. Rev. Melkonian is cherished by his devoted wife, Jeanette and two lovely daughters, Doris and Arda. □



Gomidas Vartabed

On the 150th Anniversary of His Birth (1869-1935)

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

Gomidas Vartabed was born in the town of Kutahia in Central Anatolia on September 26, 1869. His Baptismal name was Soghomon Soghomonian and he was the son of Kevork and Takouhi Soghomonian. He was orphaned at the age of 11. A year later, Soghomon was taken by the local Armenian priest to Etchmiadzin. His singing talent attracted the attention of the Catholicos of all Armenians, Kevork IV. After completing his education at the Kevorkian Seminary in 1893, he was ordained as a celibate priest assuming the clerical name Gomidas. He was appointed the choir master of the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin. Meanwhile, he studied under the Armenian composer Kara-Murza.

In October 1895, Gomidas left Etchmiadzin for Tiflis, Georgia, a cultural center in Caucasus, to study harmony under composer Magar Yegmalian. In June 1896, Gomidas went to Berlin to study music under Richard Schmidt. In the same year, he was accepted into the prestigious Frederick William University where he effectively absorbed the erudition of highly accomplished German teachers. Here he was befriended by a circle of German and French musicologists who became exposed to Armenian folk music through Gomidas.

Gomidas' chief contribution was his lifelong devotion to collecting and transcribing Armenian folk songs. He was the first person to do so. He collected more than three thousand songs.

Besides collecting popular songs, Gomidas developed the scholarship that identified the ethno-musical characteristics specific to Armenian folk composition. He also collected Kurdish, Turkish and Iranian folk songs and melodies. He presented his findings at European Ethno-musicological system. European masters gave glowing praise to Gomidas as the principal author of Armenian national composition, which also earned him membership in the International Musical Society (IMS). In fact, he became the first non-European member of IMS. After hearing one of Gomidas' songs entitled *Andouni* ("The Homeless"), the famous French composer Claude Debussy declared, "This song is enough to assure Gomidas a place in the company of the great composers."

In 1910, Gomidas Vartabed moved to Constantinople (Istanbul), the Ottoman Imperial Capital, where he founded a choir of three hundred voices name *Koussan* ("Minstrel"). He

encountered opposition from conservative religious circles for his emphasis on secular music.

As the opposition grew, his support by his friends and admirers intensified. Through their moral and financial support, Gomidas Vartabed was able to organize a series of concerts in major metropolitan centers such as Constantinople, Paris, Geneva, Berne, Venice, Cairo and Alexandria.

One of the noteworthy contributions of Gomidas Vartabed was his study and analysis of the obscure, ancient "newmes" (*Khaz*) that were used as musical markers in the Sharakans of the Armenian Church. In addition to his compositions, he also arranged the entire music of the Armenian Liturgy (*Badarak*) of the Armenian Church.

During the widespread Armenian deportations and the Genocide organized by the Young Turks of the Ottoman Empire, Gomidas Vartabed along with more than two hundred Armenian intellectuals was arrested on the night of April 24, 1915, was taken into custody and tortured. He also witnessed and experienced the trauma of the Armenian victims of the Genocide which caused him to fall into deep depression.

Through the efforts of his non-Armenian admirers and friends, such as Henry Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, Mehmet Emin Yurdakul, a Turkish nationalist poet and Halide Edip, a well-known Turkish writer, Gomidas was released and brought back to Constantinople. But his post-traumatic stress disorder lingered. In the fall of 1916, he was taken to a hospital in Istanbul, and then moved to Paris in 1919, where he died in a psychiatric ward on October 22, 1935. His remains were transferred to Yerevan in 1937 and were buried in a beautiful public garden, bearing his name "Gomidas Ayki" (Gomidas Vineyard).

As a great musicologist and composer, Gomidas Vartabed occupies a special place in the Armenian cultural history. His music lives forever. □



Armenian Memorial Church, Watertown, MA

In 1897, seven Armenian men immigrated to the United States from Marash, Turkey to escape the impending killing of Armenians. Encouraged by their families, they intended to help them immigrate as well. Having known each other in Marash, they found one another in the South End of Boston.

Soon they located the American missionaries they had met in Marash and asked for guidance in this new land. In a sense, their lives were starting again. Lonely and uncertain of the future, they were greeted warmly. The missionaries provided advice on housing, work, and interaction with Americans.

Despite the many challenges these men faced coming to a new country with virtually nothing, they cherished their Christian faith and gathered for Bible studies. As other Armenian families arrived, their Bible Study group grew larger. Their missionary friends kindly offered them the Massachusetts Congregational Church Headquarters conference room for their meetings.

In 1915, these Armenian Protestants were encouraged to incorporate by the Massachusetts Congregational Church. With faith, they began their journey. They chose the name Cilician Armenian Memorial Church (Congregational): “Cilicia” because this was the section of Turkey where Marash was located; “Memorial” in memory of family and friends killed by the Turks during the Genocide that was occurring. Later, in 1959, the Church dropped Cilician from its name.



Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian delivers children's message during Sunday morning Worship Service.



Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian with Sunday School students.

This newly formed Church of Armenian Protestants started to gather Sunday afternoons at the Shawmut Congregational Church in Boston's South End. As Armenians moved from Boston to the suburbs (especially Watertown, where jobs were available at the Hood Rubber, and later the Watertown Arsenal), the Church held services in Cambridge at a Baptist Church in Central Square, and the First Armenian Church and the White Congregational Church, both in Porter Square.

During these early years, ministers served voluntarily, and fundraising was limited without a permanent building. But the Church was blessed with a special leader. In 1925, Lucia Mikaelian was hired by the City Missionary Society as a social worker to assist Armenian families in the Boston area. While this amazing Christian woman served all Armenians—Protestant, Apostolic, and Catholic—she was one of the most influential leaders in our Church. She was affectionately known as “Oriort Lucia.” At the Armenian Memorial Church, she served as clerk, Sunday School Superintendent, and preacher when needed. Oriort Lucia helped the new Church organize and develop in many ways.

By the late 1940s, the Church had accumulated enough money to buy a property in Watertown on Bigelow Avenue. Construction started in early 1950. The congregation first worshiped in the social hall, and on November 4, 1950, upon completion, started worshipping in the sanctuary.

The excitement of having their own church after so many years was an emotion of pure joy. At the same time, the Armenian Memorial Church had a new leader who would be responsible for its continued growth and success. Rev. Dr. Yervant Hadidian, Co-Minister at the New Britain Congregational Church in Connecticut, was invited to be the Minister. He accepted and felt strongly that all Sunday services and meetings should be conducted primarily in English. This coming of age ended the use of Turkish, which had been native to many.

In its strong commitment to its ministers, the Church purchased two separate homes throughout the years to serve as parsonages: the first on Lincoln Street in Watertown, and the second on School Street in Belmont. In 1960, the Church purchased a home across the street to serve as classrooms and offices. Five years later, it sold the home to the Watertown Savings Bank and constructed a Christian Education wing to the Church. Rev. Dr. Hadidian retired in 1963 after years of dedicated service. Under his leadership, the Church had grown from a core of first-generation families into a vibrant church community.

During the following years, the Church was able to nurture its new ministers. Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian helped the new influx of Armenian immigrants fleeing the war-torn Middle East. And with the Church's blessing, he earned his Doctor of Ministry. After serving the Church, he became one of the leaders of the national and international Armenian Evangelical (Protestant) community.

During his years as the Minister, Rev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian connected with everyone. Because of his youth and warm, engaging personality, he helped a new generation of young people become vital, active members in the Church. In 1988, when the earthquake in Armenia occurred, he formed a church committee



Armenian Memorial Church Sunday School Mission Outreach.

that raised \$250,000 to assist in recovery efforts.

Significant renovations have also been made to the Church over the years. In 1984, an old, valuable pipe organ was purchased and installed, which enriched the Church with its magnificent sound.

Today, Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, who also earned his Doctor of Ministry with the Church's blessing, leads the congregation as it looks forward.

The membership of the Armenian Memorial Church shares the vision that the Church is a place where the congregation regularly gather to worship God and learn more about His life and teachings while working together to achieve major Church objectives and goals. □



Rev. Dr. Avedis and Dr. Arpi Boynerian.



Armenian Memorial Church Ladies Aide Appreciation Coffee Hour.

AMAA's Centennial Celebrated in Moscow

The fall of the Soviet Union and Armenia's independence, coupled with the gradual disintegration of the residual Armenian communities which survived the Genocide and inhabited the neighboring Arab countries to historic Armenia, came to radically change the demographic distribution of Armenians in the Diaspora.

The most serious challenge to the Armenian nation came from the waves of exodus from post-Soviet independent Armenia to all corners of the world. The result was the emergence of new communities in Europe and the swelling of existing ones in the West and most notably in Russia.

Historically, Russia has always had a nucleus Armenian community which excelled in entrepreneurial skills since the 18th century. Today, large Armenian communities dwell in Moscow and its outskirts, Saint Petersburg, Krasnodar in the Caucuses and in the Black Sea shores of Sochi, Russia and Sukhumi, Abkhazia.

Faithful to its mission following the Great Commission of "and this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations," since the early 1990s of the past century, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has been planting churches in the vast planes of Russia, punctuating the landscape of the largest country in the world with houses of worship and illumination, and sustaining the faith, Armenian culture and the God graced identity of our peers.

On the occasion of AMAA's Centennial, the faithful in Eurasia joined the worldwide Armenian communities to celebrate AMAA's Centennial. Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, and his wife Sona attended the celebrations that took place in Moscow the weekend of May 24-26.

Union was held in Moscow on Thursday, May 23, led by Rev. Dr. René Léonian, President of Eurasia Union. The Pastors who participated in the Conference were Rev. Masis Akopyan (Moscow), Rev. Sasun Karakhanian (Sochi and Sukhumi/Abkhazia), Preacher Armen Ghukasyan (Armavir/Krasnodar), Preacher Gurgen Poghosyan (St. Petersburg), Rev. Karen Khatchtryan (Tbilisi) and Rev. Valery Zakarian (Akhalkalak).

During the Conference reports were given from local churches and included information about the AMAA's worldwide Centennial celebrations. Other topics that were presented were the Mission of the Church, relations with other Armenian Evangelical Unions worldwide and the biblical and theological formation of pastors and leaders in the churches of Eurasia Union. The Conference ended with an intense moment of prayer and intercession.

Concert in Moscow Celebrates AMAA's Centennial



Organized by the AMAA and the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia, AMAA's Centennial was celebrated with a special Concert on Saturday, May 25. The talented musicians who took part in the evening Program were all members of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow.

Over 170 guests attended the celebratory Concert. Rev. Masis Akopyan, Pastor of Moscow Church led the Program. The Invocation was offered by Rev. Karen Khachatryan, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Tbilisi. Local Russian pastors brought their greetings during the Program. Rev. Dr. Léonian spoke about his service to the AMAA over the past 25 years first in Armenia and currently in Eurasia. The keynote speaker was Mr. Khanjian



Cutting the Celebratory Cake. **L to R:** Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Sona and Zaven Khanjian and Rev. Masis Akopyan.



L to R: Preacher Gurgen Poghosyan (St. Petersburg), Rev. Karen Khachatryan (Tbilisi), Rev. Dr. René Léonian (President UAECE), Rev. Masis Akopyan (Moscow), Rev. Sasun Karakhanian (Sochi and Sukhumi/Abkhazia), Preacher Armen Ghukasyan (Armavir/Krasnodar), Rev. Valeri Zakarian (Akhalkalak).

Pastoral Conference in Moscow

As part of the AMAA Centennial activities organized by the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of Eurasia, a Pastoral Conference for ministers serving within the churches of Eurasia

who spoke about the goals and objectives of the Association. He emphasized AMAA's vision and God's faithfulness.

The Program concluded with the cutting of the Centennial Cake and Rev. Dr. Léonian's Benediction.

Centennial Worship Service Held at Moscow Church

On Sunday, May 26, a special Worship Service was held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Moscow celebrating AMAA's 100 years and praising God for His faithfulness throughout the years.



All the Pastors of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia (Russia and Georgia) participated in the Worship Service. Mr. Khanjian brought the message based on Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world."

At the conclusion, the Pastors of the Eurasia Churches presented a recognition plaque to Mr. Khanjian thanking the AMAA for all the services rendered throughout the world and in Eurasia. On behalf of all the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Eurasia a donation was presented to the AMAA for its worldwide outreach and mission. □



Pastors of the Eurasia Churches present a recognition plaque to AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian.

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Visits the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Tbilisi and Akhalkalak/Javakhk

The trip to Georgia was an eye-opening experience meeting the faithful both in Tbilisi and Javakhk.

Unlike most Diaspora communities, a long and deeply rooted Armenian population resides in Georgia. Large numbers of indigenous, ethnic Armenians populate the region abutting Armenia called Javakhk, where in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Moscow drew the borders among the Republics of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus. The beautiful Georgian capital city of Tbilisi has been a bastion of Armenian cultural, intellectual, educational and political presence long before the Genocide or the independence of Caucasian Republics.

The Armenian Declaration of Independence of Armenian provinces from the Russian Empire was proclaimed in Tbilisi by the Armenian National Council on May 30, 1918 before the Council moved to Yerevan. This trip to Georgia has been a revelation in two aspects.

Spirit of Faith

There is an amazing spirit of faith in the limited circles of our mission with whom we interacted in Tbilisi, Akhaltsikhe, Gumburdo (Kumurdo in Georgian) and Akhalkalak. At the same time most of the population is unchurched, creating a huge void that needs to be filled with the spread of the Word of God. In that sense, Georgia needs our attention where the field is ripe for natural improvement and expansion.

In Tbilisi the physical condition of the Church and parsonage were severely unsafe and uninhabitable. Since our visit, Pastor

Karen Khachatryan's family has been relocated to an appropriate apartment and we are working to relocate the Church.

In Gumburdo, reminding us of the Lord's humility being born in a barn, the faithful use Rev. Valeri Zakaryan's family garage for worship services. (See the cover photo on this issue of AMAA News.) Whether under a mountain of snow or in the scorching sun, the faithful regularly gather in the garage to worship God.

In Akhalkalak, the capital of Javakhk, the faithful gather at the AMAA Center for worship services. The recently renovated AMAA Center installed a new vinyl covering on the cold concrete floors since our last visit.

National Heritage

Both Russia and Georgia compose the largest and closest Armenian communities to the Homeland and yet assimilation and ethnic erosion are serious national challenges with dire consequences. The AMAA alone will not be able to save these communities. However, every effort within the realm of our mission in support of the spiritual needs of our people will help solidify their national heritage. All indications are that the Georgian government will continue to deliberately ignore the physical development of the Armenian enclave of Javakhk. A gradual expansion of our presence, support in the region and modest development are now part of the AMAA's vision.

Please keep the Armenians of Georgia in your prayers and support the AMAA mission there.

On May 28-29, 2019, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, and his wife Sona, accompanied by Rev. Dr. René Léonian, President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia, visited Tbilisi (Tiflis), the capital of Georgia.

Upon their arrival in Georgia, they met with the Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Tbilisi Rev. Karen Khachatryan and his wife Angela. They saw firsthand the building which hosts the worship services and the activities of the Church, as well as the condition of the apartment where the Pastor and his family live.



Zaven and Sona Khanjian with Rev. Karen Khachatryan and his wife Angela in front of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Tbilisi.

The Armenian Evangelical Church in Tbilisi was originally established in the 1880s. Currently the Church activities are held in a dilapidated building, with several cracks in the walls, and insufficient to accommodate the growing Church. Thanks to the AMAA, the Pastor will soon move into a new apartment and the activities of the Church will continue to take place in a safer location.

Rev. Karen and Angela shared details of the Church programs with Mr. Khanjian and their vision for the future of God's work in Tbilisi and surrounding towns of the greater Tbilisi Region.

During their visit to Tbilisi, they also met with Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan, Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia. The meeting was very fraternal with Bishop Vazgen providing



Rev. Karen Khachatryan, Sona and Zaven Khanjian and Rev. Dr. René Léonian (far right) with Bishop Vazgen Mirzakhanyan, Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia.

information about the history of the Armenians in Georgia and the mission of the Church today.

It was a moving experience to visit the Armenian Pantheon in Tbilisi, where many famous Armenian intellectuals are buried. Mr. and Mrs. Khanjian also had an opportunity to visit the great Armenian Poet Hovhannes Tumanyan House Center – the apartment where the poet and his family lived. The city of Tbilisi (Tiflis) is of great importance for Armenians. Armenians played a big role in this city, especially in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, when it was a very important intellectual center for Armenians.

On May 30, 2019, Mr. Khanjian, his wife Sona and Rev. Dr. Léonian visited the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Akhalkalak Region and Javakhk in Georgia and became acquainted with the activities of the Church as well as with AMAA Programs carried out in the area. In Akhalkalak Region there are 72 villages of which 65 are populated mainly by Armenians (about 80,000 Armenians).



AMAA Center in Akhalkalak.

The Armenian Evangelical Church is present in four cities: Akhalkalak City, Gumburdo, Sulda and Akhaltsikhe. The Senior Pastor Rev. Valeri Zakaryan is assisted by three preachers: Gamo Mghdesyan, Merujan Saharyan and Sasun Markaryan.

Mr. Khanjian and Rev. Dr. Léonian had a long meeting with Rev. Valeri Zakaryan who explained in detail the history of the Armenian Evangelical Church in this Region. He expressed his enthusiasm about the Church's programs and his hope for further development of activities in the future.



Worship Service in Akhalkalak.



Zaven and Sona Khanjian with the leadership of Akhalkalak Church.



Zaven and Sona Khanjian with the leadership of Gumburdo Church.



L to R: Sona Khanjian, Father Maghakia Amiryan, Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Akhalkalak Region, Zaven Khanjian, Rev. Valeri Zakaryan and Rev. Dr. René Léonian.

A special meeting was organized for the members of the Armenian Evangelical Church in the AMAA Center in Akhalkalak City. Many Church members came. After singing and praise, Mr. Khanjian spoke about the AMAA's history and goals. He also encouraged everyone to remain faithful to our Christian faith and our Armenian roots. The gathering was also a way to celebrate the 100 years of AMAA in this beautiful region of Akhalkalak. While in Akhalkalak, they also had an opportunity to have a fraternal meeting with Father Maghakia Amiryan, the new Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Rev. Zakaryan lives in the village of Gumburdo. The worship service in Gumburdo Church is held in his garage. This location is very modest, but there is great passion and dedication from the congregation. □



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RA Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan Receives AMAA Executive Director/CEO

On June 14, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian. The newly appointed Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan also participated in the meeting.

The Prime Minister highly appreciated the mission and service of the Armenian Missionary Association of America in the United States and Armenia. Mr. Pashinyan expressed hope that the AMAA programs will continue to expand and develop in Armenia. Mr. Pashinyan welcomed the role of the Armenian Evangelical Church and its long-standing service to the Armenian people.

Mr. Khanjian noted that the Association intends to give a new impetus to the economic, social and educational programs implemented in the Homeland and added, that inspired by the processes taking place in Armenia, the AMAA will enhance its contribution to the development of the Homeland. Mr. Khanjian welcomed the Prime Minister's decision to appoint Zareh Sinanyan as High Commissioner for the Diaspora and expressed confidence that with his activities he would substantially contribute to the strengthening of Armenia-Diaspora ties.

In the course of the meeting, Mr. Khanjian briefed the Prime Minister about the ongoing activities of the Association and its upcoming programs. (primeminister.am)

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Attends Meetings in Armenia and Lebanon

ARMENIA

Meetings in Armenia

On May 27, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian met the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA) Senior Pastor Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian. The current services and future direction of the Church were discussed during the visit.

On June 1, Mr. Khanjian had meetings with Harout Nercessian, Manvel Saribekyan and Andranik Mardoyan. The ED got acquainted with issues concerning their activities and made related assessments where applicable. As a result of the discussions, advice was shared, and dates set for their implementation.

Visit to Ijevan and Noyemberyan Centers

On May 28, on his way to Georgia, Mr. Khanjian, visited the ECA and AMAA offices in Ijevan and Noyemberyan and held talks with the leaders and staff. The ED was updated about the blessings and the challenges faced by their ministries.



L to R: Zaven and Sona Khanjian, members of Ijevan AMAA/ECA team Gayane Gularyan and Elyanora Evanesyan, Rev. Albert Paityan and Rev. Dr. René Léonian.

Visit the New Gyumri Complex

On May 31, on the way from Akhalkalak, the Khanjians stopped in Gyumri and toured the new AMAA Center and ECA Church complex. The ED and Mrs. Khanjian were welcomed by the Gyumri Pastor Rev. Aram Babajanian and AMAA Office Manager Karen Manukyan. AMAA activities have multiplied since the Center opened and the ECA in Gyumri continues to witness a

healthy growth. Mr. Khanjian thanked the Gyumri leadership for their diligent and innovative service.

Visit Evangelical Church of Armenia in Aintab



Rev. Gagik Hovhannisyan (left) and Harout Nercessian and Zaven and Sona Khanjian (right) meet with members of Aintab Church.

On Sunday, June 2, Mr. Khanjian with his wife Sona and Harout Nercessian, AMAA's Representative in Armenia, visited the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Aintab, Armenia and worshipped with the Church Pastor Rev. Gagik Hovhannisyan and the local congregation. Mr. Khanjian shared a message with the congregation and the guests spent time in fellowship after the service.

Program in Yerevan Celebrates Works and 150th Birth Anniversary of Gomidas



Andranik Mardoyan (left) with the musicians.

On June 2, Mr. Khanjian attended the Jubilee Celebration dedicated to the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Gomidas in the Hall of the AMAA Center in Yerevan, Armenia, with the participation of famous vocalists Elvira Khachatryan (soprano) and Hayk Tonguryan (tenor), accompanied by musician-performer of the opera theater Vasili Rolicz.

Among the guests were representatives of the academic and cultural centers of the Republic of Armenia, writers, scientists, intellectuals and heads of public organizations. Images reflecting the various episodes of the life of Gomidas, poetic citations and biographical information presented by the MC and the breathtaking music of Gomidas performed by the young artists created a magical atmosphere in the Hall. The audience was so moved, impressed and touched that they found it difficult to react.

Armen Safaryan, President of the International Puppetry Association of Armenia (UNIMA-Armenia) expressed his admiration and gratitude to the AMAA for organizing such an event which was in harmony with the human and creative nature of Gomidas.

Visit to Former AMAA Headquarters on Nikol Duman Street



Meeting with the AMAA Staff at Nikol Duman Headquarters.

During the morning of June 3, Mr. Khanjian visited the former AMAA Armenia Headquarters on Nikol Duman Street, where the Aynilian Clinic and warehouses are currently located. Mr. Khanjian spoke with the social workers, medical staff, warehouse director and other employees about their services and reviewed the physical improvement plans for the Center.

Meetings with ECA and AMAA Leadership



Zaven Khanjian meets with Rev. Avetik Khachatryan and Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan.

On June 3 in the afternoon Mr. Khanjian met with Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, Assistant Senior Pastor of ECA, and the Director of ECA Christian Education Department, Rev. Avetik Khachatryan. Mr. Khanjian was updated on the Church's ministries and those of Christian Education and discussed issues of concern and future plans.

In the afternoon, Mr. Khanjian met with the AMAA-Armenia senior Administrative Managers: AMAA Representative Harout Nercessian, Financial Controller Armen Stepanyan and External Relations Coordinator Lusine Ohanyan. Administrative, financial and organizational issues were discussed.

Meetings with AMAA-Armenia Staff

On June 12, Mr. Khanjian met Harout Nercessian and Financial Controller Armen Stepanyan and reviewed the 2019-2020 opera-



Zaven Khanjian meets with the AMAA-Armenia staff.

tions budget. The Executive Director also met with Construction Projects Manager Hakob Hovhannisyan and reviewed current and future construction and renovation projects.

Mr. Khanjian also met with the AMAA-Armenia Office Managers and ECA Pastors. He expressed his appreciation for their work and outlined AMAA's vision for the future of the Armenia ministries. Following the joint meeting, Mr. Khanjian also met the AMAA Artsakh Representative Victor Karapetyan.

Presentation of Zaven Khanjian's Books

On June 12 in the evening, under the auspices of the Union of Writers of Armenia, "Diaspora" Scientific-Educational Center and AMAA-Armenia, a presentation of AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian's books, "This Home Is Yours or Mine" and "Aleppo: First Station" was held at the AMAA Center in Yerevan, Armenia. (See full story on page 30).

Visit to Shogh Center in Yerevan



On June 13, Mr. Khanjian conferred with AMAA Benefactors, the Bilezikian family, and visited the Yerevan "Shogh" Community-Based Day Center. Center Coordinator Naira Kerobyan described to the guests the Center's Mission, challenges faced by the children and their daily routine at the Center, work done with the parents, and activities of the art groups. Harout Nercessian praised the Center's experienced professionals including teachers and social workers. It should be noted that in addition to educational, social, psychological and leisure services, the children are provided with a daily hot meal.

Avedisian School Commencement Ceremony

On June 14 in the afternoon Mr. Khanjian, along with the AMAA staff, representatives of institutions of higher learning in

Yerevan, government offices, various schools, partner NGO's, teachers, parents and students attended the Commencement Ceremony of the Avedisian School. (See full story on page 31).

Meeting with His Holiness Karekin II

On June 14, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian and his wife Sona, Harout Nercessian, Andranik Mardoyan, Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, and Arsen and Dr. Hasmik Baran paid a visit to Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin II at the Holy Mother See of Etchmiadzin. They discussed denominational and organizational issues of common concern and interest. There was consensus that such meetings and discussions, which are manifestations of Christian love, should continue and be expressed through mutual cooperation and activities.

Anna Hakobyan Hosts AMAA Representatives



On June 14, Anna Hakobyan, Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of "My Step" and "City of Smile" hosted AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, accompanied by his wife Sona and AMAA-Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian.

During the meeting Mr. Khanjian spoke about his contacts in Armenia and impressions emanating from these meetings.

Both sides touched upon the role of the media and the necessity to counter misinformation. In that context, Mr. Nercessian stressed that after the Velvet Revolution the media activity in Armenia has changed. "The media have become freer covering events and issues," he said.

"I spend more time at the "Haykakan Zhamanak" newspaper, as professionalism journalism is of great importance to me. It is extremely important that the media provide comprehensive information, regardless of ownership and orientation. The role of the free press is very important as it is conditioned by the democracy and development of the state," said Ms. Hakobyan.

The meeting covered activities of "My Step" and "City of Smiles" Foundations and the possibility of cooperation within the framework of their programs. (annahakobyan.am)

It should be noted that AMAA supports the Muratsan Oncology Clinic in Yerevan and facilitates the transmittal of 'City of Smile' Foundation's fundraising in the United States to Armenia.

Mr. Khanjian's visit to Armenia was effective from all perspectives. His meetings and agreements shall enhance the development of a new and higher level of relations and programs by AMAA together with their implementation and effective application.

LEBANON

On Wednesday, June 5, the leadership of the AMAA, headed by Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, met with the leadership of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East to discuss their partnership in mission and ministry. Also present were AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, AMAA Near East Committee Chair Berjouhi Gulesserian and members of the AMAA Near East Committee. The UAECNE was represented by President Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian and President of the UAECNE Central Committee Rev. Raffi Messerlian, officers of the CC and representatives of Armenian Evangelical Churches, affiliates, youth groups, schools and other AE institutions and instrumentalities.



On Thursday, June 6, the Haigazian University Finance Committee met during the day while a Banquet was held later that evening. The Haigazian University Fundraising Gala Banquet, in support of Haigazian Scholarship Funds, took place in the Grand Ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel in Downtown Beirut.

The Gala was attended by many dignitaries from the Lebanese and Armenian community, religious leaders, AMAA leadership, Board members, benefactors and supporters, faculty, staff, alumni,



and friends of Haigazian University. Special messages were delivered by University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Board of Trustees Chairwoman Dr. Hasmig Baran, and Mr. Khanjian.

On Friday, June 7 and Saturday, June 8, the Haigazian University Board of Trustees held its Annual Meeting on the University Campus in Beirut. The Trustees reviewed the University's finances, budget and 2018-2019 academic year results.

On Sunday, June 9, Mr. Khanjian shared the Word of God at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash in Bourj Hammoud.

On Monday, June 10, Mr. Khanjian met with Haigazian University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian and the Chair of the UAECNE Central Committee Rev. Raffi Messerlian. □



Haigazian University Board of Trustees.

UAECNE Holds 73rd General Assembly

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian

The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) held its 73rd General Assembly July 7-10, 2019 in Lebanon. Beginning with a Communion Service on Sunday night at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash, the Assembly continued its meetings at the KCHAG Conference Center.

UAECNE President Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian preached on the Assembly theme, "For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 3.11. A number of local and international partner churches and organizations conveyed their greetings, including the AMAA, AEWC and the Common Global Ministries Board. Rev. Haroutune Selimian, Head of the Armenian Protestant Community of Syria, administered the Sacrament.

Preceding the business meetings each day Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian, General Assembly Speaker, explored this year's theme, "The Foundation-Stones of the Armenian Evangelical Church's Existence," which brought a historical and biblical perspective to the topic (I Cor. 3.1-17 and Eph. 4.1-16).

The business meetings included reports highlighting the Union's activities. Special attention was paid to the Union's financial challenges as well as topics related to UAECNE schools. Elections were held for those Central Committee members completing their terms. Along with other reports, Rev.

Selimian informed the Assembly about the current situation in Syria, and Rev. Vazrik Safarian presented an overview of the Armenian Evangelical Church's current ministries in Iran.

The sermon at closing worship was delivered by Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian who discussed I Pet. 2.1-10 and issued a call for all Armenian Evangelicals to put into practice the clear description of the Church offered in this passage from God's Word. The Union President gave his words of appreciation and closing thoughts, after which the Assembly prayed the "Lord's Prayer," and the 73rd General Assembly of the UAECNE drew to a close. □



Zaven Khanjian's Books Presented in Yerevan

On June 12 at the Armenian Missionary Association of America's (AMAA) Center in Yerevan, Armenia, two books written by Zaven Khanjian, AMAA President/CEO, "Is This House Yours or Mine?" and "First Station: Aleppo," were presented under the auspices of the Armenian Writers Union, "Diaspora" Scientific – Educational Center and the AMAA.

The books were published in 2007 and 2012 in Los Angeles, but this is the first time they have been presented in the Homeland.

The books express the feelings and experiences of the Armenian Diaspora author. In the first book Mr. Khanjian writes about the Motherland and his ancestors in Western Armenia. The second book is about his Motherland Aleppo.

Guests and speakers at the event included Armenian Writers Union President Ed Militonnyan, "Diaspora" Scientific - Educational Center Director Suren Danielyan, YSU History Department Dean E. Minasyan, RA National Academy of Sciences Archeology and Ethnography Institute Researcher H. Cholaqyan, RA National Academy of Sciences Oriental Studies Institute Researcher, and Genocide Expert Anush Hovhannisyian.

Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Scientist/Secretary Narine Margaryan spoke with praise of the author emphasizing that he had maintained his love and appreciation not only toward his Homeland but also toward the Motherland of his ancestors despite living all his life in the Diaspora. Armenian Writers Union President Ed Militonnyan, as a confirmation of the expressed praise, gave the Writers Union Certificate to Mr. Khanjian. Literature Specialist Suren Danielyan stated that the experiences of Mr. Khanjian are not solely personal; they save from being lost not only the memory, but the non-personal, hidden in dust history, the universal red thread of national memory. This was the mission of the author's pilgrimage to Western Armenia, the Motherland of his ancestors. The books were both characterized as silent novels, full of longing with a desire to be seen by many eyes.

The title "Permanent table-books of the nation accompanying our generation" can rightly become not only the main emphasis of the presentation, but also a message reminder to the readers of Mr. Khanjian's books. A special charm was added to the event by the theatrical presentation from his wife, Sona. The photos shown on the screen depicted the important events from Mr. Khanjian's life

and his biography described in his books.

In his speech Mr. Khanjian thanked the well-known speakers for reading and appreciating his books. He emphasized that "especially today it is important to maintain in the Diaspora the feeling and pride of being Armenian and transfer our ancestors' relics to our generations." (Reported by Noyan Tapan News Agency on July 22, 2019 – www.nt.am) □

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SOCIETY

Presentation of books

On June 12 in the Armenian Evangelical Center the presentation of the books "Is this house yours or mine?" and "First station: Aleppo" of Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) executive officer Zaven Khanjian took place under the auspices of Armenian Writers Union, "Diaspora" scientific - educational center and Armenian Evangelistic Partnership.

Those books were published in 2007 and 2012 in Los Angeles, but this is the first time they are presented in the homeland. In the books the feelings and experiences of the famous Armenian Diaspora intellectual are expressed: in the first one about the motherland of his ancestors, the Western Armenia, and in the second one about his motherland Aleppo. The guests and speakers of the event, Armenian Writers Union President Ed. Militonnyan, "Diaspora" scientific - educational center director Suren Danielyan, YSU History Department Dean



his homeland but also towards the motherland of his ancestors despite living all his life in foreign countries. Armenian Writers Union President Ed. Militonnyan, as a confirmation of the expressed praise, gave the



E. Minasyan, RA National Academy of Sciences Archeology and Ethnography Institute researcher H. Cholaqyan, RA National Academy of Sciences Oriental Studies Institute researcher, Genocide Expert Anush Hovhannisyian, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute scientist-secretary Narine Margaryan spoke with a praise to the author emphasizing that he had maintained his love and appreciation not only towards

Writers Union Certificate to Z. Khanjian. Literature specialist Suren Danielyan in his speech in particular stated that the experiences of Z. Khanjian are not solely personal, they save from being lost not only the memory, but also the non-personal, hidden in dust of the history, the universal red thread of national memory. This is the mission of the pilgrimage to the Western Armenia, the ancestors' motherland. The

books "Is this house yours or mine?" and "First station: Aleppo" were characterized as silent novels, full of longing and desire to be seen by many eyes.

The title "Permanent table-books of the nation accompanying our generation" can rightly become not only the main emphasis of the presentation, but also a message-reminder to the readers of Zaven Khanjian's books whose number also owing to this event should increase. A special charm was given to the event by the theatrical presentation of his wife, Sona Khanjian. And the shots shown on the screen were telling about the important events of the famous intellectual's life and biography also described in his books. In his speech Z. Khanjian thanked the well-known speakers for reading and appreciating his books. He emphasized that especially in our days it is important to maintain in foreign countries the feeling and pride of being Armenian and transfer the ancestors' relics to our generations.



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A Beautiful Partnership of Hope Between AMAA and Hope for Armenia - Espoire Pour L'Armenie of France

A house has been acquired in the city of Sisian in Armenia with the help of AMAA and Hope for Armenia, for a family of 6 orphans and their grandparents. We wish God's abundant blessing upon this beautiful family!



Avedisian School Bids Farewell to its Graduates

The 2019 Commencement Ceremony of the AMAA's Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan was very emotional. On June 13, teachers, parents, upper grade students, representatives of the AMAA and the Evangelical Church of Armenia, founders of the School, members of the School Board, overseas guests, and representatives of various local and international organizations came together to bid farewell to the School's 31 graduates.

Principal Melanya Geghamyan greeted the guests and expressed her heartfelt advice to the graduates. She thanked School Benefactors Edward and Pamela Avedisian (who were unable to come to Yerevan this year), the Bilezikian family and other Benefactors, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, Harout Nercessian, AMAA Representative in Armenia, partner organizations and the parents for believing in the vision of the Avedisian School, for their trust, and for always supporting the School.



Keynote speaker Doreen Bilezikian.

Mr. Khanjian addressed the graduates and wished them much success in their journey to higher achievements and advised them to walk in the right path and to build a "new and powerful" Homeland.

Keynote Speaker was Doreen Bilezikian representing the Bilezikian family. Her message was profound and encouraging. She spoke about the dangers, difficulties and obstacles in the



crossroads of life, and advised the graduates not to fall apart, and to continue their road uninterrupted.

On behalf of the graduates, Anna Galstyan spoke in English.

The graduates then stood up along with their Home Room Teachers K. Harutyunyan and N. Margaryan as their names were called one by one to receive their Certificates from School Principal Mrs. Geghamyan, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian and Benefactor Yervant Chekijian. Then 31 caps simultaneously took off in the air.

The warm atmosphere continued in the School's lobby around the refreshment table. Regardless of their spoken language, place of residence, profession and occupation, those gathered under the roof of the Avedisian School had much to say to each other.

"And let knowledge and love become the compass of your great voyage." Melanya Geghamyan, School Principal. □

AMAA-Armenia, Teach for Armenia to Assist Children of Kirants

In 2014, on the eve of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, a Consortium was formed between six organizations to reach out to the children of the Martuni Community, a border village in the Chambarak Region of Republic of Armenia.

The Consortium has now expanded to eleven organizations to include The Armenian Missionary Association of America-Armenia (AMAA-Armenia), "Shen" Charity NGO, Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), "Development Principles" NGO, Fund for Armenian Relief, World Vision Armenia, Teach For Armenia (TA), World Council of Churches Armenia Round Table Foundation, Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), "Armenian Caritas" Benevolent NGO and "Diaconia Charitable Fund."

In the first phase of the Consortium and in cooperation with Teach For Armenia, AMAA-Armenia sponsored a well-trained teacher to teach IT courses in the Martuni community of Chambarak Region for two years, both at the school level and at extracurricular and community level programs.

Encouraged with the success of the cooperation with Teach for Armenia's initiative in the previous community, AMAA-



Armenia and TA will continue their cooperation in the Kirants community, another border village of Tavush Province, where a Russian language teacher will be sent in September, to conduct both subject-based and multidisciplinary training.

On July 26, 2019, the two Consortium member organizations solemnly signed their agreement to cooperate in the Kirants Community of Tavush Province, where AMAA-Armenia and TA will implement this program in the Primary School of the Community and will actively initiate community development and impact programs. □



Armenia Medical Mission Emulates God's Love in Armenia



By Dr. Albert and Sue Phillips*

What a blessing it has been to be of service to the people of Armenia for the last eleven years and we thank the Lord for all who have ventured along with us and given of themselves to serve others.

This year the Armenia Medical Mission Team of 43 members and 9 Armenian translators staffed ambulatory clinics in two separate regions of Armenia June 13-23. The North Team returned to Vanadzor and Stepanavan and the South Team traveled to Sisian and Kapan, a new location. We are thankful to God to have had enough medical personnel to be able to split the team this year and thus give care to several regions in Armenia. The Medical Mission Team consisted of 7 physicians, 2 dentists, 2 pharmacists, 5 nurses, 1 occupational therapist and 27 willing volunteers. The clinics were set up in the Evangelical Churches of the towns we visited. Dr. Chris Tashjian, his wife Barbara, and Allison Phillips were the South Team leaders and without their leadership we could have never been able to expand as we had this year.

Patients came from local neighborhoods and many were transported from outlying villages to the clinic by bus. Throughout the course of the week, over 1,000 patients, including adults and children, were seen. Our dentists treated 450 children and educated them on dental hygiene. We witnessed the results of our ongoing treatment by finding less dental disease in the group of children who return each year. Similarly, our adult patients who have received treatments in the past, reported improved health after receiving treatments for diabetes and hypertension. Through the support of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), we have been able to give the patients enough medications to last one year.

While patients were waiting to be seen, our nurse educators gave lectures on various medical issues. During the clinic, patients were



Patients wait to be seen by the doctors at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanavan.

invited to attend church services where team members shared their testimonies and the Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached. After each visit with the doctor, patients were given an opportunity to have a prayer offered. Many were touched both physically and spiritually. This year, 98 families of young children ages 6 months to 5 years had the opportunity to participate in an Early Childhood Development Assessment administered by Dr. Allison Phillips, OTD. The results of this testing found that 3 of the children had developmental delays and parents were given individual counseling and instruction. We are happy to announce that the AMAA has made a large investment in the Medical Mission ministry. This month, the AMAA hired an Armenian physician employee who will return to our clinic locations to provide follow up and continuity of care.



The Armenia Medical Mission Team at the Etchmiadzin Cathedral.



Dr. Barb Tashjian checks children's teeth.



Dr. Albert Phillips consults with a patient with help from translator Lilit Movsesyan and scribe assistant Vars Megerditchian.

The Medical Mission Team has committed to return to Armenia for our twelfth year in July 2020. If you have a desire to serve our brothers and sisters in Armenia or are interested in knowing more about the Armenia Medical Mission, please visit our website. The link can be found at AMAA's website www.amaa.org under "Projects." Medical and non-medical, Armenian or non-Armenian speaking volunteers are welcome. We are humbled to see how God has grown the Medical Mission over the years. We can assure you that your generous donations to the AMAA earmarked for the Medical Mission go directly to the Armenian people and are only used for medications and supplies. Jesus during His ministry often met the physical needs prior to addressing the spiritual needs of those He met. We are committed to emulating His love in Armenia.

"The AMAA Medical Mission is an embodiment of both the reflection of Christ's love poured unto our people and the spreading of the Word of God in action," said Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA. "We thank those at the helm of the Medical Mission and the many volunteers who demonstrate their faith in action." □

** Dr. & Mrs. Albert and Sue Phillips are AMAA's Armenia Medical Mission Team leaders.*



Tim Smith shares his Christian testimony during the service at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanavan.



Dr. Albert and Sue Phillips North Team Leaders and Drs. Chris and Barb Tashjian South Team Leaders.



Nurses and nurse educators Hermine Getzoyan, Naomi Poladian, Lucy Huckabay, Lena Akelian and Arpi Sarian.



Team of physicians Karine Mouradian, Christina Huckabay, Albert Phillips, Jeff Bogosian, Christine Barseghian, Ruth Sepanian, and Chris Tashjian.

AMAA 2019 Summer Internship to Armenia Provides Interns a **VISION** for **MISSION**

By Rev. Serop and Dr. Alina Megerditchian*

We were pleased to be asked and were blessed to plan, organize and lead this year's AMAA Summer Internship to Armenia, July 4-19.

The theme of the Internship "Vision for Mission" was based on Acts 2:17 "Your young shall see vision." The purpose and the aim of this year's Internship was to provide the youth of our churches from different parts of the world – the United States, Canada, Australia, South America, Europe and the Middle East – the opportunity to learn about and appreciate many ministries of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the Evangelical Churches of Armenia (ECA) in the Homeland, to be a time of personal spiritual growth through daily Bible study, discussion, prayer and evaluation sessions and to discover our rich Armenian heritage, roots and legacy through exposure to some significant historical, religious and key cultural sites of our beloved

Homeland. The Interns accomplished these goals by serving and helping through different types of services, such as visiting, cleaning houses, cooking and having prayer time and lunch with the lonely, elderly and needy families in Vanadzor and Shiragamout, assisting at Vacation Bible School for children and children with special needs in Vanadzor, making jam (Mourabba) for Shogh Center's kids in Vanadzor and working with children at AMAA's Sheen Shoghig Camp in Hankavan.

Fifteen Interns from eight countries bonded with each other very quickly and very well, as one family, and each day actively participated in the program and praised God for witnessing AMAA's and ECA's ministries for the children, youth, adults, elderly and needy of Armenia.

Interns toured significant AMAA ministries such as AMAA's Avedisian School and the Shogh Day Centers. They met with local church pastors and congregations supported by the AMAA through the network of the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA). They had the opportunity to spend two days working alongside leaders at AMAA's Sheen Shoghig Camp in Hankavan. They spent five days doing mission projects in Shriagamout and Vanadzor and they also visited cultural sites to discover their rich, Armenian cultural roots.

We would like to commend the Interns for having the vision and implementing it through mission and, with their own money, sponsoring a child at Shogh Day Center in Vanadzor.

Also, we would like to commend the Interns for sharing their photos and writing their thoughts, reflections and daily activities and ministries on AMAA's Intern's Blog page <https://amaainterns.wordpress.com/>

The following are excerpts from the Interns' experiences.

For me the Internship was such a great experience. I was able to meet new people and become closer with them. It was an incredible experience, and I think everyone should experience this amazing trip and learn new things like I did. Thank you for everything.

Sarin Tashjian



Morning Devotion at the steps of Cascade.



Rev. Serop Megerditchian at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan.



Interns pray at the AMAA's Center in Yerevan.



Visiting an impoverished family in Vanadzor.



Arts and Crafts with VBS children at Evangelical Church of Armenia in Vanadzor.



VBS at Evangelical Church of Armenia in Vanadzor.

During the Internship, I was so impressed by what AMAA ministries accomplish in Armenia, as well as by how the churches, against all odds, strive to serve the Lord using every resource no matter how small. **George Al Sahili**

Over the two weeks, we witnessed both the tourist version of Armenia and the real cities of Armenia. I learned about the different AMAA services. It was an experience that I've never had before, and I am already recommending this trip to others so they can experience what I have seen. **Avedis Zeitounilian**

The Internship was truly enriching and life-giving. I left the Internship with a sense of fulfillment, being blessed spiritually and relationally. I was glad to see the good work done by the AMAA in Armenia. I am looking forward to seeing how I can be a part of that. **Vahé Jebejian**

I participated in the AMAA Summer Internship 2019 for two main reasons: first to see my Homeland, and second to serve God in my Homeland. In our short two weeks of living and communicating with the people of Armenia, I learned a lot about how to be a better version of myself. **James Bederian**

I had an amazing experience during AMAA Summer Internship 2019. I've learned so many lessons during the Internship, that no matter what our situation in life, our faith and hope gets stronger by believing in God, because He will be with us every time we need Him. **Jack Mousa Oghli**

The Internship was a well-planned mission project. It was strategically designed to begin the trip by touring the beautiful areas of Armenia, display Armenia's reality through missionary work in the middle, and end with a fun cultural education. We learned how much the AMAA is doing for the Armenian people through educational, evangelical and humanitarian programs. **Christine Kutlu**

I give thanks for enjoying the amazing and ancient culture of Armenia and at the same time to share and spend time with those who need company, a piece of bread, or even a smile. During these weeks we learned a lot of things, but overall that no matter the situations we are going through we must know that God is always present. **Mariano Gongora**

Seeing the condition of people's lives, and what work the AMAA does, I was really affected and wanted to do more for these people when I returned home. I enjoyed spending time with needy children and families, especially knowing that I was helping and making them happy. **Talar Sarmazian**

In this Internship I learned to always be thankful to God for what I have. I also learned to be a humble, loving and caring person. AMAA's ministries and this year's Internship will always be in my memory and I will practice what I learned in my daily life. **Zarmig Tashjian**

I am very thankful that the AMAA gave me this opportunity to participate in this Internship. I never knew how much they do for these people. This trip inspired me to be a better person and always be grateful for what I have. **Serly Purzekian**

The Internship was a wonderful experience that I was able to share my testimony with them, talk about God and His love for us and have prayer time together. I want to thank the AMAA for everything they did for us and for every single project they have to help our people. **Hovig Bardakjian**

AMAA Summer Internship 2019 was a very good experience to see the love of God by serving and helping as one body in Christ. I learned what the AMAA is doing in Armenia. I learned to not take God and life for granted. Many thanks for this opportunity. **Alicia Minasian**

I am grateful I had the opportunity to be part of the AMAA Summer Internship 2019. I learned many new things about my Homeland Armenia, the people and their lifestyle. I want to thank the AMAA for this trip and for



Interns enjoy activities at AMAA's Sheen Shogig Camp in Hankavan.

giving us the opportunity to see Armenia and for the work they do because it's truly amazing and unbelievable. **Karni Purzekian**

The success of the AMAA Summer Internship relies heavily on the support, prayer, help and insight from the leadership at the AMAA Offices both in Paramus, NJ and Armenia. Special thanks go to AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian, AMAA-Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian, Senior Pastor Evangelical Church of Armenia Rev. Mgrditch Melkonian, Associate Pastor of Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, AMAA-Yerevan Headquarters Office Administrator Anna Ohanyan, Vanadzor AMAA Office Administrator Janna Danielyan and AMAA's PR/Communication's Coordinator Louisa Janbazian for their continued willingness to make this program thrive for the benefit of our young Armenians all over the Diaspora.

In conclusion, let's continue our prayers that the good seeds planted in our Interns' lives, by God's grace, may grow and bear fruits of lifelong "Vision for Mission." May God continue to bless the AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Church for His glory. □

** Rev. Serop Megerditchian is the Senior Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, CA.*



Interns visit AMAA's Shogh Center in Yerevan.

AMAA Interns Meet with RA's Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan

On July 9, RA's Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan and the Head of the Office of the High Commissioner Sara Anjargolian received 17 Interns of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) coming from 8 countries - USA, Canada, Australia, Lebanon, Syria, Switzerland, France and Argentina. During their 15 days in the Homeland, the youth not only got acquainted with their Homeland but did humanitarian service. They stayed in Vanadzor for five days to help and minister single elderly people, care for them, help them in everyday jobs and clean their homes.

After welcoming the youth, Mr. Sinanyan and Ms. Anjargolian spoke about their repatriation stories, their motivation to return to Armenia, and to live and work in the Homeland. Mr. Sinanyan mentioned that he lived in the US for 31 years, but after the Velvet Revolution in Armenia last year, he decided to return to his Homeland, to live here and to work for the Armenian Government. Ms. Anjargolian said that she had been living in Armenia for the past seven years. She founded the Impact Hub in Yerevan and began helping young starters to be established in Armenia. Referring to Diaspora Armenian youth, Ms. Anjargolian stressed that it is extremely important to keep in touch and share news with each other and to make suggestions.

The leader of the Interns Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Senior Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena, CA, spoke about the goal of the Vision for Mission initiative of the AMAA's 2019 Internship Program in Armenia.

Mr. Sinanyan, commenting on the Interns' visit to Armenia, said, "If you link your future with Armenia, then we have succeeded. The role of the Diaspora is not just to help Armenia. The Diaspora should also participate in the future of the Homeland." Ms. Anjargolian urged them to come to Armenia for volunteer work, to



work, to establish a business, to engage in tourism, or even work for the government, because the doors are already open.

The Interns then had the opportunity to ask some questions to the Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs. Responding to one of the questions regarding the goals in the relations with the Diaspora, Mr. Sinanyan said that it is necessary first to improve and restore these relations, and to use the potential of the Diaspora for Armenia. One of the Interns asked how important the work of the Armenian government with the Diaspora is. Mr. Sinanyan said that now the goal is to link Diaspora Armenians to Armenia as much as possible, and the ministry's reshuffling of the Prime Minister's office has given a higher status to Armenia-Diaspora relations.

The Interns were also interested in the Commissioner's opinion on the Diasporan-Armenian dividing line. "These divisions are the result of historical events. In reality, we are not different. The moment when we understand that we are Armenians and our Homeland is Armenia, the differences will disappear," said Mr. Sinanyan.

At the end of the meeting the Interns emphasized that in Armenia people are warm, the Armenian heart is immediately felt and they are ready to share what they have. It felt they have fallen in love with Armenia. (Office of RA's Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs) □

"Armiss" Choir Performs Concert in Beirut, Lebanon

The "Armiss" Choir, under the sponsorship of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and its President, Rev. Megrditch Karagoezian, after a four-year hiatus took to the stage once more. The Concert took place before a near-capacity crowd on Sunday, June 2, 2019, in the sanctuary of the First Armenian Evangelical Church, Beirut, Lebanon, under the direction of Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian and accompanied by Henry Ishkhanian on piano.

Lasting a little over an hour, the program included Armenian and non-Armenian religious music as well as Armenian folk and patriotic songs. After the Choir sang Missirian's (whose pen name is "Armiss") composition, "The Lord's Prayer," the Director noted in his opening remarks that the Concert would include songs from two of the greatest figures in Armenian culture, Gomidas and Tumanyan, both of whose birth sesquicentennials are celebrated this year.

The program continued with linguist and missionary Rev. Elias Riggs' translation of the hymn, "Rejoice the Lord Is King," after which the Choir sang Gomidas' "Krisdos i metch" (Christ is revealed). They then presented Gomidas' setting of the folk tunes "Alakyaz – Khngi Dzar," joined on the cello by Shushan Artinian. Notably the Choir sang all the verses of "Alakyaz" rather than the usual custom of singing only the first two verses. Then the Choir sang Krikor Siuni's "Oy, Nazan Im" with Garin Haidostian on violin. To complete this folk song section of the Concert, the Choir sang "Mayisi Kisher" (A May Night) by the Greek-Armenian conductor and composer H. Papazian.

The "Armiss" Choir also sang works by non-Armenian composers: Handel's "Forever Blest Is He," the African American spiritual, "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?" and "God's Peace" by White.

The program continued with the spoken words of Tumanyan, featuring Rosine Kelougian reciting selected "Quatrains."



Tumanyan's words were woven together with melodies from Gomidas, played on the duduk by Hagop Kelougian.

To complete the program the "Armiss" Choir sang Alan Hovhanness' "Vasbouragan" and Harutiunyan's setting of Tumanyan's poem, "Hayrenikis Hed (With My Homeland)." This final piece featured solos by Hagop Kelougian and Zarminé Bedrossian.

At the conclusion of the Concert the participants enjoyed the warm appreciation of the attendees expressed by a standing ovation.

The Concert's program contained not only the list of songs, but also important information and observations about the composer and librettist of each piece.

The 32 volunteer members of the Armenian Evangelical "Armiss" Choir demonstrated their wholehearted commitment throughout the months of preparation and produced a most encouraging result. Those present in the church that day left with the expectation that "Armiss" will return to the stage again next year and thereafter continue offering a yearly concert, bringing its particular gleam to the cultural and spiritual life of the community. □

Construction of AMAA Center in Shushi

In the city of Shushi, Artsakh, the AMAA offers pre-school education, Christian education, the Shogh Day Center and a number of other social programs. And since 2003, with the financial support of the Bedrosian family of Fresno, CA, the AMAA has operated the Bedrosian Camp, where each year hundreds of children from different regions of Artsakh enjoy their summer time.

In May 2019, another dream is being realized with the financial support of the Bedrosian family – construction of AMAA Center in Shushi. The Center will help expand the projects that the AMAA is implementing today in Shushi.

The AMAA expresses its heartfelt gratitude to the Bedrosian family for undertaking this important project. May each program serve for the glory of God and the welfare of the Armenian Nation. □



Rev. Gilbert Léonian, President of AEEF, Visits Armenian Evangelical Churches in Bulgaria

By Rev. Bedros Altunian, Senior Pastor of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Bulgaria

Changes in 1990 led to a rapid development of churches in Eastern Europe. After 50 years of atheism, we could once again freely confess our faith. A new generation took responsibility for restoring to life closed churches and scattered communities. There was a lot of optimism and great expectations, but there was also insufficient knowledge and little experience.

But we were not left to our own resources in this new beginning. We had the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the Armenian Evangelical World Council on our side, had pastors from France visiting us, and support from churches. This was a new experience for us after many years of complete isolation. We were cordially accepted into the great family of Armenian Evangelical Christians. The sincere brotherly love warmed our hearts. Thus began the changes in Bulgaria.

It's been almost 25 years since then. After this enthusiastic start, we realized that it is easy to invite thirsty souls into a church, but it is harder to take care of them. We are still struggling with this important question: How can we bring the truth of God's word to every Armenian home? How can we get closer to the young generation? In the 21st Century, our youth, whose elders spent their lives in atheism for two generations, face serious challenges, and great temptations.

But today, loyal friends are at our back again. We have Rev. Gilbert Léonian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe (AEFE), visiting our churches, eager to meet with



Rev. Gilbert Léonian with the pastors of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Bulgaria.

our pastors in Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna and Rousse. He has encouraged us with his experiences gained while working with other churches in Europe and the Middle East. He discussed with us our problems and guided us toward making good decisions about working with children and youth, about priorities in church life, and about the need to hold regular meetings with pastors.



Rev. Gilbert Léonian and Rev. Bedros Altunian serve Holy Communion at the Methodist Church of Varna. The pipe organ was donated by the descendants of the Armenian Missionary Sampad Baghdasaryanc.



Worship Service at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Plovdiv.



Rev. Gilbert Léonian leads a Bible Study class in Plovdiv.

Through his meetings and discussions, he has helped us strengthen our unity. We have all agreed that we should again plan to build the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Bulgaria as part of the Europe Fellowship and the worldwide Armenian Evangelical Community.

We express our unanimous desire to make further important steps in the development of the churches in Bulgaria. We are



L to R: Rev. Bedros Altunian, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Deacon Agop Garabedian and Harutyun Tateosyan, Pastor of Sofia Church.

grateful for the support of the AMAA, the encouragement of Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, and Rev. Gilbert Léonian, President of AEFÉ, for helping us build a vision for the future.

We have returned to our churches with confidence that we are not alone, with gratitude for God's guidance and gratefulness for the warm brotherly support and constant help. □

Armenian Evangelical Church Building of Kokkinia Undergoes Major Renovations

The Armenian Evangelical Church building in Kokkinia, Greece is almost 100 years old. Kokkinia is the area where the Armenian refugees settled in 1920-1922. It was a deserted area and the Church building was purchased by the missionaries.

The building had never gone through a major renovation. Only part of the roof was repaired and some of the windows were replaced in 1975. The walls and wooden windows were also rotted, and the sewage system needed major renovation.

Through the support of the AMAA, the Church began a major renovation project. Currently the building's outside walls, the roof and the windows have been renovated, as well as all the rooms in the building. Future plans call for the renovation of the sanctuary, the walls, the ceiling and a face lift of the inside of the Church. □



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My First Trip to Armenia in 2018 was a Memorable One

By Sara Anoushian, AMAA 2019 James G. Jameson Essay Contest Winner

Being Armenian has always been a huge part of my identity. Whether it was attending St. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church every Sunday, going to Camp Haiastan each summer, or simply spending time with my family, I have been surrounded by the Armenian heritage and culture ever since I was young. My strong desire to travel to the Motherland sparked when I first started attending AYF Camp Haiastan. At camp we discussed our counselors' trips to Armenia, the history of the country, and the beauty of the land as well. This past summer I was given the opportunity to travel to Armenia, and it was an opportunity that I simply could not pass up. During the summer of 2018, I traveled to the beautiful country of Armenia not only to tour but to do service as well. This trip was an incredible experience and is something that I will take with me for the rest of my life.

My Uncle Steve, my Cousin Laura, and I traveled with the Armenian Missionary Association of America and went on a medical mission trip to serve those in Armenia and the Lord. We travelled with Dr. Al Phillips and his team to do this work and stayed in the country for about a week. Despite the obstacles that we had to overcome while planning the trip and the unexpected twists and turns thrown at us during the trip, our team was able to successfully help over 1,000 patients in villages across the country. This trip was even greater than I had expected. The work we did throughout the week was not only incredibly rewarding, but also interesting as I am a student pursuing a career in the healthcare field. I was able to learn a lot about the world of healthcare on a global scale, give back to the community that my ancestors were from, and spend time with my team members who became like a second family throughout the trip.

As this was both my first year as a team member and my first trip to Armenia, I was pretty nervous. I had seen pictures and videos and had heard all about the country but wasn't entirely sure as to what I was going to experience. Arriving at the Zvartnots Airport that night in June was an indescribable feeling. Traveling to Armenia was something that I have wanted to do my whole life, and when I landed, I realized that it was finally happening. As soon as we landed my family and I met up with the other jetlagged and tired team members. We then travelled to our hotel and decided that we would all catch up in the morning.

The first two days of the trip were packed with touring. From Geghard Monastery, Tatev Monastery, Khor Virab, the Armenian Genocide Memorial, all the way to Echmiadzin, we packed in a lot of sights in just two days. This first weekend was a great way to not only get to know our teammates, but to experience the great country of Armenia. Although I knew much of the history from both my family and camp lessons, being able to see this rich history



and culture in real life was something I will never forget. Climbing down into the pit where Saint Gregory the Illuminator was held for 13 years, praying in front of the eternal flame, and of course seeing Mt. Ararat through the clouds are just a few images that will stick with me forever.

After getting to see many of the main tourist attractions in Armenia, our team got to work. We drove to the location of our first clinic in Vanadzor and did a rundown of what the next few days were going to look like. Dr. Phillips and some of the more experienced team members walked us through the components of each station and guided us through the process of setting them up. Setting up the clinic was tiring and overwhelming for me personally. There were a lot of moving parts that had to be accounted for and the people of these villages were depending on us, so we had to make sure everything went correctly. While all of this was happening and our teammates were running around the church setting things up, I was still trying to piece together how this was all going to work the next day when our patients came. My normal worrisome self could not help but wonder what the next day was going to look like, and little did I know that the next day would be one of the best days of my life.

The days when we were at the clinic were long and tiring, but also so rewarding. Within the first day of the clinic alone we saw over 200 patients. On the first morning Dr. Phillips assigned everyone a job so we could focus on one task for the day to run smoothly. I was assigned as Dr. Phillips's medical scribe, and at first, I panicked. I had no idea what this job entailed and did not want to screw anything up. However, Dr. Phillips made me comfortable and taught me

everything that had to be done in order to make both his and my job easier. On that first day I had the opportunity to watch Dr. Phillips and Ani, his translator, interact with dozens of patients. This was not only an incredible learning experience but also a spiritual one as well. After every patient's exams, diagnoses, and prescriptions were completed, Dr. Phillips prayed for the patients. Listening to the beautiful prayers after each patient was a great reminder as to why our team was in Armenia in the first place. I was even given the opportunity to pray for some of the patients, which is again another experience I will never forget.

This trip is one that will stay with me forever. The everlasting impact that my teammates and the citizens of Armenia had on me is something that I cherish. From listening to one of the younger Armenian boys sing while patients were waiting to be treated, play-

ing with Nvart, one of the church worker's daughters, to speaking with the priests, doctors and other team members, everyone on this trip had an impact on somebody else one way or another.

I would like to thank the Armenian Missionary Association of America for making this trip possible and for giving me the opportunity to be a part of something so special. I could ramble on for hours about how much this trip means to me and how much I enjoyed it, and I am sure so many of the other team members could as well. Dr. Al Phillips and the AMAA make this trip special for not only the people of Armenia but for their team as well. The memories made, the lessons learned, and the people met on this trip are some that I will cherish for the rest of my life. This trip is something that I am forever grateful for and can only hope that future team members have the same unforgettable experience. □

Edward Avedisian Receives Honorary Degree From the University of Rhode Island

The Armenian Missionary Association of America is proud to announce that Edward Avedisian, a long-time AMAA Board member and major Benefactor, recently received an honorary doctorate of humane letters degree from the University of Rhode Island. The presentation took place during the School's 2019 Commencement Ceremonies on May 19.

Mr. Avedisian is one of five men and women who joined 433 esteemed individuals who have been recognized since the University's founding in 1892 with this prestigious award, the highest honor bestowed by the University.

Son of Armenian Genocide survivors, Mr. Avedisian grew up in an immigrant neighborhood in Pawtucket, RI and graduated from the city's public schools. He was a clarinetist with the Boston Pops for 35 years and the Boston Ballet Orchestra for more than 40 years. He has performed around the world and was twice appointed a Fromm Fellow for Contemporary Music Performance under the direction of Aaron Copland at Tanglewood.

Mr. Avedisian's artistic achievements are rivaled only by his philanthropy, including a \$5 million gift to the University's College of Pharmacy in 2017 in memory of his brother, Paramaz Avedisian, a 1954 graduate of the College. The pharmacy building bears his brother's name. In addition to the Endowed Professorship in Organic Chemistry, he has established the Paramaz Avedisian Pharmacy Scholarship.

He also fully funded the Center for Health Studies & Research and the Center for Business Research & Development



at the American University of Armenia. He is the founder of the AMAA's Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian K-12 School & Community Center in Armenia and was the sole Benefactor and Chair for renovation of Armenia's Nork Marash Medical Center.

In 2008, Mr. Avedisian (BU'59,'61), was named Boston University Distinguished Alumnus and has contributed to the Boston University School of Medicine and College of Fine Arts. In 2016, he was awarded the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor and presently serves as a Board Member of Light Sciences Oncology. □

Meridian School Holds Year-End Programs and Commencement Exercises

By Louisa Janbazian

Upon the conclusion of the 2018-19 academic year, the Charlotte and Elise Meridian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA held its Elementary and Middle School Commencement Exercises on June 9 in the School's Aram and Anahis D. Boolghoorjian Hall.

In the first section of the program, the 5th graders presented songs and recitations followed by the distribution of diplomas. On behalf of the School Board, Chairman Dr. Vahe Nalbandian praised God for another successful year and expressed his gratitude to all those who worked in the pursuit of excellence at Meridian School throughout the year.

Keynote Speaker was Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Associate Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles. Referring to Jesus' parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), he stressed that each one of the students was a unique person gifted with different God-given gifts and abilities. Finding, developing, and investing on those talents are the responsibility of every student, so that they can use them for their own benefit and for the benefit of their community, country, nation, school and church. He encouraged the graduates to make the right decisions based on what they have learned from morning chapels and Bible classes and to continue being nourished by the Word of God, reminding them that they have an army of people who are there for them, who love them – their parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and teachers. "Each of them is a gift and blessing who will never fail you," he said.

Following Rev. Shanazarian's message, the 8th graders presented a program of Armenian and English songs and recitations. Salutatorian speeches were delivered by Alek Ghazanian in Armenian and James Manikyan in English. Valedictorian speeches were delivered by Hovan Boyajian and Vahe Snapyan in Armenian and Alex Aywazian and



Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian addresses the graduates.

Daniella Bandari in English, followed by the presentation of diplomas and awards. As customary, the 8th graders presented the Principal with a beautiful frame with their class pictures.

In her concluding remarks, School Principal Lina Arslanian congratulated the graduates and said, "The road to success will not be easy. If you encounter obstacles or challenging situations, find ways around them, never give up, don't let these obstacles stop you. Be brave and take risks. The experiences will make you smarter and stronger. Strive for excellence not perfection; always do work that you can be proud of."

The ceremony concluded with a prayer offered by Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, CA.

The Preschool Year-End Program was held on May 18 and the Graduation and Year-End Program of Kindergarten students were held on June 1. □



Middle School Graduates.



Elementary School Graduates.

Commencement Exercises at Central High School

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. (Psalm 32.8) These words recited from the Psalms, prevailed during and after the Armenian Evangelical Central High School Commencement Ceremony in Ashrafieh, Beirut, Lebanon.

On June 28, having met all the requirements, 25 6th graders and 26 12th graders of the CHS said adieu to their former selves to achieve their greater selves. Graduates and teachers entered ceremoniously while the anthems of Lebanon, Armenia and Central High School were played. 6th and 12th grade students read verses from the Bible. Symbolically, famous Armenian writer Hovhannes Tumanyan's 150th Birth Anniversary was celebrated through a recitation of his "Old Blessing," reverberating the verse, "Live on, children, but may you not live like us." "The Fake Hunter" by Tumanyan was presented theatrically by the elementary students. Then, graceful dancers from the secondary danced "Makhmur Aghchig."

Yester Kilagblian, the Keynote Speaker, instilled a spirit of firm belief, empathy and cooperation through the example of the Cedars of Lebanon that serve a divine purpose. She urged the graduates to shine like candles by the wisdom endowed by God and to help others rise as well.



Principal Maral Deyiemenjian briefed the parents and guests on the various achievements of the School and the awards won by students in various contests and competitions.

The transfer of the school shield reaffirmed the spirit of continuity, confidence and perseverance. 12th graders sang "Psalm 19," and Rev. Raffi Meserlian thanked the Lord for His Infinite Grace. The ceremony precipitated contentment and celebration. □

Year-End Programs and Graduations at AMAA's KGs in Artsakh

On June 27, the AMAA's Yeprem and Zabel Basmajian KG of Askeran, Artsakh held their Year-End Program, celebrating with great enthusiasm the farewell ceremony of the graduates. Parents, guests and all the staff of the kindergarten were present. 36 children (18 boys and 18 girls) graduated this year and will attend elementary school in September.

During the month of June, Graduation ceremonies and Year-End Programs were also held in AMAA's Kindergartens in Martakert, Shushi and Stepanakert.

May God's love and blessing always follow them. □



Camp Bedrosian in Shushi, Artsakh



Bryan Bedrosian with the children at Camp.

For many years, summer camps for children, teenagers and youth have been organized in AMAA's Camp Bedrosian in Shushi, Artsakh.

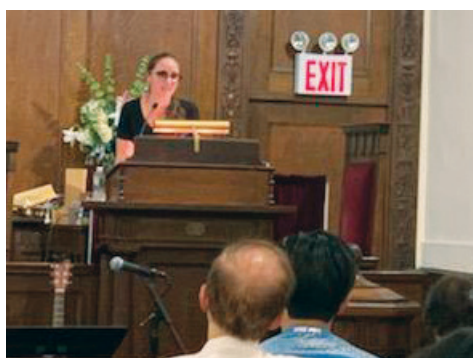
Bryan Bedrosian, representing the Bedrosian family of Fresno, CA, who are the sponsors of the Camp, visits Artsakh on a regular basis. During his last visit to the Camp, Mr. Bedrosian got acquainted with the construction work being carried out in the Camp and talked with the campers. The children shared their impressions and experiences with Mr. Bedrosian and talked about their daily lives at the Camp. Mr. Bedrosian highly appreciated the services of the Camp, especially the activities that provide Christian and moral education to the campers.

The AMAA thanks the Bedrosian family for their continued support of the Camp. □

AMAA Sundays Celebrated in AEUNA Churches

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Hollywood designated Sunday, May 19, 2019 as AMAA Sunday. Levon Filian, former AMAA West Coast Executive Director, was invited to give the sermon and share information about the Mission work of the AMAA in 24 countries. Mr. Filian's message focused on having the courage to preach the Gospel and encourage the workers in the mission field with our prayers and financial support. Rev. Abraham Chaparian, Pastor of the Church, thanked the AMAA for its mission work, and the support the AMAA has provided to their Church over the years. After the Church service, the elders held a coffee fellowship hour to learn more about the work of the AMAA.

On Sunday, July 21, the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York held AMAA Sunday. Rev. Dr. Haig Kherlopian, Pastor of the Church, compared the AMAA with the establishment of the diaconate in the book of Acts, where leaders were selected



Heather Ohaneson, Ph.D.

to make sure all the widows within the community were being fed (Acts 6:1-7). AMAA Board member Dr. Heather Ohaneson spoke about the various projects and missions of the AMAA. She encouraged the young audience to sign up for the Medical Mission and the Summer Internship Programs. Dr. Ohaneson also gave the sermon. Her message was about Jesus and the Temple Tax, based on Matthew 17:24-27. □



Levon Filian and Rev. Abraham Chaparian.



AMAA Awards Scholarships to Needy and Deserving Students

For the academic year 2019-2020, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) awarded \$231,250.00 in direct scholarship grants to college students. Eighty worthy students, who attend colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, received scholarships. The AMAA Scholarship Committee is attentively and tirelessly chaired by Robert Hekemian, Jr.

In addition, over \$25,868 was assigned as tuition assistance to 111 deserving, needy university students in Armenia.

For over 45 years, the AMAA has helped thousands of college students with scholarships, thus helping them prepare for the future and relieving the financial burden that makes it harder to focus on their work. Moreover, since its inception, the AMAA has helped thousands of students from kindergarten to high school with tuition aid. The AMAA also provides financial aid to schools and institutions of higher education in the Near East, including Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

The scholarships granted this year were provided from several AMAA scholarship funds established over the years to help students in need. Students may request applications from AMAA headquarters in Paramus, NJ beginning in January of each year. The deadline to submit applications for the 2020-2021 academic year is May 1, 2020.

JOINT STATEMENT WORLD-WIDE PRESS RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS QUESTIONS TURKEY ON THE FATE AND WHEREABOUTS OF FORCIBLY DEPORTED ARMENIANS IN 1915-1923



Guided by pan-Armenian interests on behalf of our respective organizations and institutions we welcome the joint action of the United Nations (UN) Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, which, in the framework of their mandates, addressed a Joint Allegation Letter to the Government of the Republic of Turkey.

This Joint Allegation marks an important step in the process of demanding from the Republic of Turkey to come to terms with the Past and primarily to fulfill its duty of investigation and to ensure the right of victims to the truth, justice and reparations.

It stresses the alleging violations attributable to Turkey in relation to the tragic events that affected the Armenian minority from 1915 to 1923, and their consequences for the population concerned.

It expresses concern at the reported Turkish State denial, at the legislation restraining freedom of opinion and of expression related to some wording, and ensuing lack of progress in establishing the truth and ensuring justice for the forcible deportation of Armenians between 1915 and 1923, which resulted in massive suffering, ill-treatment and deaths.

It also emphasizes that this situation affects the dignity of victims and of their descendants.

The Mandates holders solicited the observations of the Government of Republic of Turkey concerning the submitted allegation, in particular:

1. What measures has Turkey taken to establish the facts, including the fate or whereabouts of Armenians who were subjected to forced internal displacement, detention, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances during the period of 1915-1923?
2. What measures have been taken to ensure the right of victims and of society as a whole to know the truth about these events, and to ensure the right of victims to justice and reparations for the damage suffered?
3. What measures have been taken to locate, insofar as possible, the bodies of Armenians who died as a result of these events?
4. To provide information about the reasons for the adoption of the 2017 legislation preventing lawmakers from making certain expressions. To explain how this is compatible with international human rights law, in particular with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
5. To provide detailed information about the cases in which Article 301 of the Criminal Code has been applied to punish individuals for statements made alleging crimes against Armenians.

The Government of Turkey on May 17th 2019 bluntly refuses to answer those questions by UN human rights mechanisms.

We praise the special procedures engaged by the WGEID and the two Special Rapporteurs and we support the pursuit of this unprecedented and important process.

While this effort is not a substitute for Genocide recognition or full and adequate reparations for the mass atrocities and confiscations of properties suffered by the Armenians during this period, actions by the relevant United Nations human rights organs would constitute significant steps toward the disclosure of the truth and redress for this open wound on humanity.

Holy See of Etchmiadzin – HH Karekin II (Vagharshapat, Republic of Armenia)
Catholicosate of Antelias – HH Aram I (Beirut, Republic of Lebanon)
Armenian Evangelical World Council (USA)
Armenian General Benevolent Union (USA)
Armenian Missionary Association of America (USA)

The full text of the Joint Allegation letter is available at the following link: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24294>

Ամմահն Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ (Ծննդեան 150-ամեակի առթիւ)

Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Յ. Թութիկեան

Այս տարի, 2019-ը, ծննդեան 150-ամեակն է հայ նշանաւոր երգահան, խմբավար, բանահաւաք եւ հայ երաժշտութեան ազգային դպրոցի հիմնադիր՝ Կոմիտաս Վարդապետի:

Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ բազմաթիւ ճամբորդութիւններ կատարեց բնաշխարհի հայկական գիւղերը եւ հայահոծ քաղաքները: Հայ երգի ակունքներէն՝ ճշմարիտ հայ երգը հանեց, մաքրագտեց թրքախառն, քրտախառն, պարսկախառն եւ այլ ազդեցութիւններէ եւ ժողովուրդին ներկայացուց՝ անգնահատելի գանձեր դիզելով հայ երգարուեստի գանձարանին մէջ:

Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ նաեւ յատուկ աշխատանք տարաւ Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ Պատարագի խազերը կարդալու դժուարին աշխատանքի ուղղութեամբ: Իր մէկ ուրիշ հսկայ նախաձեռնութիւնը եղաւ նաեւ Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ Պատարագի Կոմիտասեան մշակումը որ հայ հոգեւոր երաժշտութեան թանկագին գոհարներէն մէկն է:

Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ, աւագանի անունով Սողոմոն Սողոմոնեան, ծնած է 1869-ին կեդրոնական Անատոլիայի Քէօթահիա քաղաքի Գէորգ եւ Թագուհի Սողոմոնեանի տան մէջ: Տասնմէկ տարեկանին որբացած՝ Էջմիածին կը տարուի Քէօթեհիայի եկեղեցւոյ վարդապետ Գ. Դերձակեանի կողմէ:

Փոքրիկն Սողոմոնի հմայիչ ձայնը եւ երաժշտութեան բնատուր տաղանդը շուտով ուշադրութեան առարկայ կը դառնան Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Գէորգ Դ-ի: 1893-ին կը ձեռնադրուի որպէս աբեղայ եւ երկու տարի ետք կը դառնայ վարդապետ: Այս շրջանին բախտաւորութիւնը կ'ունենայ աշակերտելու նշանաւոր հայ երաժշտագէտ Գարա-Սուրբայի:

1895-ի Հոկտեմբերին կը դրկուի Վրաստանի Թիֆլիս քաղաքը, որ ճանցուած էր որպէս մշակոյթի կեդրոն: Կոմիտաս այստեղ նաեւ բախտը կ'ունենայ աշակերտելու մեծահամբաւ երաժշտագէտ եւ երգահան Մակար Եկմալեանի: Յունիս 1866-ին՝ կը մեկնի Պերլին կատարագործելու երաժշտութեան արուեստը: Կ'ընդունուի իբրեւ ուսանող հռչակաւոր Ֆրետերիք Ուիլերմ Համալսարանը աշակերտելով մեծանուն երաժիշտներու, յատկապէս երաժշտագէտ Ռիչարտ Շմիթի:

Ուսանողութեան եւ յետ-շրջանաւարտութեան տարիներուն կը բարեկամանայ այդ օրերու Եւրոպացի համբաւաւոր երգահաններու հետ, որոնք շուտով կը ճանչնան Կոմիտասի երաժշտական տաղանդը եւ մեծապէս կը քաջալերեն զինք: Իր կարգին, Կոմիտաս Վարդապետն ալ կը ծանօթացնէ անոնց հայ ժողովրդական եւ եկեղեցական երաժշտութիւնը: Եւրոպացի երաժշտագէտներու յանձնարարութեամբ ան անդամ կ'ընդունուի Միջազգային Երաժշտագիտութեան Միութեան: Համաշխարհային համբաւ վայելող երաժիշտներ կը դրուատեն Կոմիտասի տաղանդը: Ֆրանսացի նշանաւոր երաժիշտ/երգահան Գլոտ Տէպիսին երբ կը լսէ Կոմիտասի «Անտունի» երգը կը յայտարարէ. «Ասիկա բաւական է Կոմիտասը դասելու մեծ երաժիշտներու կարգին»:

1910-ին Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ կը հաստատուի Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան մայրաքաղաք Պոլիս, ուր կը կազմակերպէ իր 300 հոգինոց Գուսան անուն երգչախումբը: Սոյն երգչախումբը մեծ ժողովրդականութիւն կը վայելէ երաժշտասէր հասարակութեան կողմէ: Բայց կը գտնուին նաեւ նախանձոտ քննադատներ, որոնք խեթ աչքով կը դիտեն Կոմիտասի աշխարհիկ երգերու կատարումը: Մակայն Կոմիտասի բարեկամները նեցուկ կ'ըլլան իրեն եւ կը քաջալերեն զինք որ երգահանդէսներ կազմակերպէ Եւրոպայի եւ Միջին Արեւելքի հայաշատ գաղութներու մէջ, զորս մեծ խանդավարութիւն կը ստեղծեն ամենուրեք:

1915-ի Օսմանեան Տերութեան կողմէ գործադրուած Հայոց Ցեղասպանութիւնը տարերային ձեւով կը խախտէ հայ ժողովուրդի հաւաքական կեանքը: Ապրիլ 24-ի կէս գիշերին Պոլսոյ հարիւրաւոր մտաւորականներու հետ կը ձերբակալուի նաեւ Կոմիտաս Վարդապետը: Աքսորի ճանապարհին վրայ ան ականատես կ'ըլլայ հայ ժողովուրդի արհաւիրքին. սրտաճմլիք տեսարաններ խորապէս կը ցնցեն երիտասարդ կղերականին միտքն ու հոգին եւ կը քայքայեն իր ջիղերն ու ներաշխարհը:

Ամերիկեան դեսպան Հենրի Մորկենթոյի, ինչպէս նաեւ Կոմիտասի Թուրք բարեկամներու, բանաստեղծ Մեհմետ Էմին Եփրտաքիի եւ Հալիտ Էտիպի միջնորդութեամբ Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ ազատ կ'արձակուի, բայց հոգեբանօրէն բոլորովին խանգարուած վիճակի մէջ...:

1916-ի աշնան Կոմիտաս Պոլսոյ հոգեբուժական հիւանդանոց մը կը դրուի եւ 1919-ին մասնաւոր կարգադրութեամբ Փարիզ կը փոխադրուի ուրիշ հիւանդանոց մը, ուր շուրջ 19 տարիներ ետք ան կը վախճանի Հոկտեմբեր 22, 1935-ին: 1937-ին անոր աճիւնները կը փոխադրուին իր անունը կրող Երեւանի հանրային գեղեցիկ պարտէզներէն մէկուն, «Կոմիտաս Այգի»-ին՝ մաս կազմելու անմահանուն Հայկական Պանդէոնին:

Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ հայ մշակոյթի պատմութեան մէջ իւրայատուկ տեղ մը կը գրաւէ որպէս հանճարեղ երաժշտագէտ եւ երգահան: □



Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ

«Ապրեցէք Ծառայութեան Կեանքը»

Դոկտ. Հրայր Ճէպէճեան

Այս մէկը միայն սոսկ խօսք չէ...: Ոչ ալ յորդոր առանց իրական կեանքի փորձի:

Այլ վկայութիւն եւ խրատն էր նուիրեալ անձի մը՝ որ իր համակ կեանքը նուիրած էր Քրիստոսի եւ Անոր Եկեղեցիին ու տակաւին համայնքի ծառայութեանը համար՝ Լիբանանի եւ Միջին Արեւելքի մէջ՝ նաեւ երբ հրաժեշտ կ'առնէր մեզմէ հաստատուելու համար Ամերիկայի Միացեալ Նահանգներ եւ միանալ իր զաւակներուն:

Իսկ այս նուիրեալը՝ Արամ Սարգիսեանն էր որ իր ամբողջ կեանքը նուիրեց մէկ կողմէ կրթական գործին, նոյնքան նաեւ եկեղեցիին, Հայ Ժողովուրդին ու տակաւին գիրին ու գրականութեան: Իրեն նուիրուած հրաժեշտի հանդիպում-հիւրասիրութեան օրը՝ Էշրէֆիէի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի մէջ, անոր խօսք-վկայութիւնը եղաւ յորդոր մը մեր բոլորին: «ԱՊՐԵՑԷՔ ԾԱՌԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ»:

Արամ Սարգիսեանի կեանքը եղած էր ուսուցչութեան համար՝ եւ ան սկսած էր իր առաքելութիւնը Կիպրոսի մէջ, ուր նաեւ իր մասնակցութիւնը բերած է տեղւոյն Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի մէջ, որպէս աշխարհական քարոզիչ: 1970-ական տարիներուն վերադարձաւ Լիբանան եւ դարձեալ ուսուցիչ՝ Հայ Աւետարանական Կեդրոնական Բարձրագոյն վարժարանին մէջ: Եւ հոս սկսաւ ծանօթութիւնս Արամ Սարգիսեանի հետ, երբ ես տասներորդ դասարանի աշակերտ էի նոյն վարժարանին մէջ: Ան ստանձնած էր կրօնի դասաւանդելու դասաւանդումը եւ ան եղաւ մեր ուսուցիչը:

Բայց Արամ Սարգիսեանի «ծառայութեան» կեանքը եթէ ընդգրկեց կրթական մարզը, բայց եղաւ շատ աւելին: Եւ այդ «շատ աւելի»ին մէջ, ես առիթը ունեցայ քալելու հետը «առաքելութեան ճամբուն» մէջէն եւ բաւական երկար տարիներ: Արամ Սարգիսեան պիտի շարունակէր իր կրթական գործը որպէս տնօրէն՝ Հայ Աւետարանական Ծամկեան-Թաթիկեան Վարժարանի մէջ, բայց ան նաեւ ստանձնեց Քրիստոնէական Ջանից Գործադիր Մարմինի ատենապետութիւնը, որուն կազմին մէջ էի ես: Ու տակաւին՝ ան ստանձնեց հրատարակչական գործին պատասխանատու խմբագիրի պաշտօնը՝ «Ջանասէր», «Պատանեկան Արձագանգ» եւ «Լոյս»: Եւ հոս մենք միասին շալկեցինք հրատարակչական գործին «քաղցր լուծը», իր յուսահատութիւններով, յուսախաբութիւններով, բայց նաեւ գործին եւ անոր անհրաժեշտ շարունակականութիւնը ապահովելու յաջորդող տարիներուն: Արամ Սարգիսեանի «հանդարտ» նկարագիրը եւ իմ աւելի «տաքարին» բնաւորութիւնս կարծէք հրաշքի համագոր եւ միաձուլուող իրականութիւններ դարձան տարիներու վրայ եւ միասին շատ մարտահրաւերներ փորձեցինք յառաջ քշել...: Արամ Սարգիսեան կ'ապրէր Քրիստոնէական «Յոյսի» պատգամին իրականութիւնը եւ զայն կը թարգմանէր իր ստանձնած պատասխանատուութիւններուն մէջ: Եւ յուսահատ երեւցող գործը կ'ուզէր տեսնել ապրող իրականութիւն:

Եւ ինչպէ՞ս ներկայացնել Մ.Ա.Հ.Ա.Ե. Միութեան եւ անոր Կեդրոնական Մարմնի երկարաշունչ ժողովները...: Երկարաշունչ, եթէ մէկ կողմէ ժամանակի իմաստով, բայց նաեւ բովանդակութեամբ: Ու տակաւին բովանդակութենէ դուրս ժայթքող խնդրայարոյց բոլոր օրակարգերը: Եւ Արամ Սարգիսեան մէկ-մէկ պիտի արձանագրէր այդ բոլորը որպէս ատենադպիր՝ բայց նաեւ իր հանդարտ ու անոր ետին պահուած իր սրամիտ ու դիպուկ կատակներով, պիտի հանդարտեցնէր «տաք» մթնոլորտը, բայց նաեւ երեւի մեզ բոլորս զգաստութեան պիտի հրաւիրէր թէ հոգեւոր եղբայրներ ենք՝ անկախ բոլոր անհամաձայնութիւններու...:

Եւ պիտի քալէինք տարիներու վրայ այս «առաքելութեան ճամբուն» մէջէն: Արամ Սարգիսեանը երեւցող ներկայութիւն էր բայց համեստ: Չկար Արամին մէջ մարդը որ հպարտ էր ու պարտադրող: Հոգեւոր դաստիարակութիւնը իր մէջ կերտած էր Քրիստոնէական արժանիքներով մարդը, որ գիտէր մարդկայինը մարդուն մէջ՝ եւ նոյն մարդուն հետ ըլլալու եւ անոր համար ապրելու իրականութիւնը:

Արամ Սարգիսեան ունեցաւ բազմաթիւ աշակերտներ: Ան միշտ ալ ամուր կեցաւ իր սկզբունքներուն եւ համոզմունքներուն վրայ՝ եւ փորձեց ջամբել իր աշակերտներուն նոյնինքն այդ «անշեղ» դաստիարակութիւնը:

Պոսթըն հաստատուելէ ետք՝ Արամ Սարգիսեան շարունակեց իր նուիրական կեանքը տարբեր բովանդակութեամբ: Իր մասնակցութիւնը բերաւ տեղւոյն Հայ Աւետ. Նահատակաց Եկեղեցիին մէջ: Ամերիկա այցելութիւններուս ընթացքին մի քանի անգամ կրցայ հանդիպիլ Արամին: Կրցած էր պահել իր հանդարտ նկարագիրը ու տակաւին իր կատակասէր-ուրախ տրամադրութիւնը: Կրնայի նաեւ տեսնել թէ սկսած էր դանդաղիլ, ինչ որ մարդկային կեանքի բնական ընթացքն է եւ մեր բոլորին համար: Եւ այդ հանդիպումներէն մէկուն, Պոսթընի մէջ հարց տուի Արամ Սարգիսեանին. «Չե՞ս ուզեր բոլոր գրութիւններդ մէկ հատորի մէջ ամփոփել»: Իրեն յատուկ հանդարտ ու մեղմ ժպիտով նայեցաւ ինծի ու ըսաւ: «Ո՛վ պիտի կարդայ...»:

Իրապաշտ մարդն է՛ր...: Որ սկսած էր նաեւ տեսնել ներկայ օրերու տրամադրութիւնները...:

Եւ պիտի հասնէր գոյժը...: Արամ Սարգիսեանն ալ աւարտեց իր երկրային կեանքը անցնելու համար յաւիտենականութեանը...: Բայց ան աւարտեց իր երկրային կեանքը մեզի ձգելով մէկ մեծ աւանդ-կտակ: «ԱՊՐԵՑԷՔ ԾԱՌԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ»:

Արամ Սարգիսեանի մահուան գոյժը լսելով, ուզեցի երթալ բաւական անցեալ: Հոն՝ այն «առաքելութեան ճամբան» որ միասին քալեցինք եւ որ եղաւ բաւական երկար: Երկար, բայց նոյնքան լեցուն: Իսկ լեցո՞ւնը: Արամ Սարգիսեանի ծառայութեան կեանքն էր: Այն ծառայութիւնը որ խօսքէն շատ ու շատ աւելի անցաւ՝ կերտելով ապրող ու վկայութեամբ լեցուն կեանք մը, որ կերտեց նոր կեանքեր: Եւ ես ալ նայելով այդ «առաքելութեան ճամբուն» ու մեր անցած այդ բոլոր ժամանակահատուածներէն՝



Արամ Սարգիսեան

կը տեսնեմ թէ ինչքան բան սորվեցայ Արամ Սարգիսեանէն ու իր նման նուիրեալներէն, որոնց համար ապրիլը ծառայութեան համար էր ու անոր միջոցաւ կեանքեր կերտել:

Արամ Սարգիսեանի մահուան գուժը տխուր է: Բայց երբ կը շարունակեմ վերանայիլ այդ «առաքելութեան ճամբան», որուն մէջէն քայլեցինք բաւական երկար, ունինք գոհունակութիւնը: Գոհունակութիւնը՝ թէ սորվեցայ ծառայութեան կեանքի արժէքը: Եւ Արամ Սարգիսեանի ու իր նմաններուն կեանքերը մեզի համար եղան Աւանդ, ուր մենք սորվեցանք բայց նաեւ տեսանք թէ մեր կեանքերուն հիմքը պէտք է դնել Արժէքի գիտակցութեանը վրայ:

Արամ Սարգիսեանի երկրային կեանքը վերջացաւ: Բայց չվերջացաւ անոր ջամբած ծառայութեան կեանքը: Այդ կը շարունակուի: Եւ այս շարունակուող իրականութեան մէջն է որ ունինք մեծագոյն մխիթարութիւնը: Թէ Արամ Սարգիսեան արժանացաւ մեծագոյն պարգեւին եւ պարգեւատրումին: Թէ ան «բարի պատերազմը պատերազմեցաւ ու ընթացքը կատարեց» եւ ան հիմա «կը մտնէ Տիրոջը ուրախութեանը մէջ»:

Իսկ մենք: Որ տակաւին կը շարունակենք երկրային մեր կեանքերը այս «առաքելութեան ճամբուն» մէջ: Եւ որ այս նոյն ճամբան կը դժուարանայ ժամանակին հետ ու կը բարդանայ...: Յուսահատութեան եւ յուսախաբութեան մթնոլորտներ կը բազմապատկուի՞ն...: Եւ երեւի կրնանք փորձուիլ դասալի՞ք ըլլալ...: Եւ կամ ընդհատել մեր ճանապարհորդութիւնը...:

Բայց պիտի յիշենք պատգամը. «ԱՊՐԻԼ ԾԱՌԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ»: Եւ Արամ Սարգիսեանէն մեզի փոխանցուած իրական ու ապրող կեանքի վկայութիւնը եւ փորձը: Եւ որ այսօր տակաւին կը հնչէ զօրաւոր: Եւ որ իրական է. «ԱՊՐԵՑԷՔ ԾԱՌԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ»:

Եւ որ պիտի շարունակենք «Առաքելութեան ճամբան»...:

Յարգանք Արամ Սարգիսեանի ապրած երկրային կեանքին:

Կեանք մը՝ որուն պիտակը բայց նաեւ ինքնութիւնը մնաց...:

«ԾԱՌԱՅՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԿԵԱՆՔԸ»: □

Չորն Ասեմ...

Վարդուկ Պալըզեան*

«Չորն ասեմ, զորն վկայեմ» ըսելու պահն է, Պարոն Սարգիսեան:

Չորն ասեմ այն աւանդէն, որ մնաց տարիներու մեր միատեղ աշխատանքէն: Աւանդ՝ որ հիմա կարելի է միայն ջերմօրէն յիշել ու յիշելով կրկին անգամ ապրիլ Արամ Սարգիսեան մարդուն մեծութիւնը իր խոնարհութեան, եւ իմաստուն լոյսութեան մէջ:

Որպէս Հայ Աւետարանական Ծամեան Թաթիկեան Վարժարանի աշակերտուիլի՝ աշակերտակիցներուս պէս անմոռանալի կը գտնեմ Երկուշաբթի առաւօտեան պաշտամունքի պահերը, մանաւանդ՝ Առակաց գիրքէն մեզի հաղորդուած Աստուածաշունչի իմաստութիւնը, հիմնալիօրէն կապուած մեր առօրեային:

Ապա կը յիշեմ Ուսուցչաց Օրուայ առթիւ աշակերտ-գրասենեակ հաճելի ու խանդավառ գործակցութիւնը՝ պատուելու համար Ծամեան Թաթիկեանի յարկին տակ տքնող կրթական մշակները, որոնցմէ նաեւ եղաւ մեր սիրելի տնօրէնը՝ որպէս ընդհանուր պատմութեան դասատու:

Վարժարանին ընթացքը աւարտելէ ու վկայուելէ ետք, հրաշալի առիթ ունեցայ անմիջական գործակցութեան, երբ աշխատանքի սկսայ դպրոցին գրասենեակին մէջ, որպէս օգնական քարտուղարուի: Լիբանանեան քաղաքացիական պատերազմի ծանր օրերուն, մեր վարժարանին գրասենեակին մէջ տիրող խաղաղութիւնը ո՛ր կրնայինք գտնել: Անձամբ երախտապարտ եմ այն հանդարտ, իմաստուն, արդարադատ եւ պարկեշտ տնօրէնիս վարմունքին վկան ըլլալուս համար, որով վարեց հայկական վարժարանի մը նաւը՝ մինչ դպրոցին ու գաղութին շուրջ ամէն բան անորոշ ու անկայուն էր եւ պատասխանատու դիրքերու վրայ եղող անհատներ ենթակայ էին տեսակաւոր ճնշումներու եւ անտեղի քննադատութիւններու:

Ապա, Հայ Աւետարանական Կեդրոնին (նախկին Բեթանիա վարժարանը, երբեմնի շոգեկառքի կայարանին դիմաց), վայելեցի խմբագիր-դրացիիս առաջնորդութիւնը, մինչ ինք Ջանասէրի, Պատանեկան Արձագանգի ու Լոյսի խմբագրութիւնը ստանձնած էր, իսկ ես կողքի սենեակին մէջ ՔԶ Գործադիր Մարմնի գրասենեակը կը պահէի: Հոս, իր ամենէն հարազատ դերին մէջն էր: Այդ օրերուն, երբ տակաւին համակարգիչի գործածութիւնը նոր նիւթ էր, կարելի էր տեսնել թուղթին վրայ անդուլ հակած խմբագիրը, ատենադպիրը, թղթակցութիւն վարողը- միշտ ժպիտ առաջացնող խօսք մը ժպտուն շրթներուն...

Ուրիշ էր պարոն Սարգիսեանը: Նոյնիսկ անհամաձայն ըլլալը կամ բարկութիւն արտայայտելը (զինք ամենէն աւելի կը բարկացնէին շարաթանները) ուրիշ ձեւ մը ունէին- ձեւ մը, որ լսողին քաղցրութեամբ կը պարտադրէր անսալ խօսքին: Բնականաբար, սակաւախօս մարդուն ամէն մէկ խօսքին պէտք է ուշադրութիւն դարձնել: Իսկապէս, պարոն Սարգիսեանին ե՛ւ կարծիքը, ե՛ւ հագուադէպ դիտողութիւնը մեծ հետաքրքրութեամբ կ'ընկալուէին:

Ուր որ ալ վայելեցի պարոն Սարգիսեանին ներկայութիւնը եւ անոր հետ գործակցելու առիթը, կրթական, եկեղեցական, միութենական, վարչական, թէ ընտանեկան ոլորտներուն մէջ, տեսայ նոյն անձը- խօսքն ու գործքը ներդաշնակ, հանդարտ, ժպտուն, իմաստուն եւ խոնարհ մարդը- որուն աւանդը, վստահ եմ, իր հարազատներուն, աշակերտներուն եւ գործակիցներուն մէջ պիտի շարունակուի:

Թող Հայրն Աստուած մխիթարէ մեզ բոլորս եւ իրեն նման անհատներ շնորհէ ազգիս հայոց: □

*** Վարդուկ Պալըզեան Տնօրէնուիին է Նոր Մարաշի Հայ Աւետարանական Ծամեան Թաթիկեան Երկրորդական Վարժարանի (Լիբանան)**

Harry L. Guzelimian

Harry Guzelimian of San Diego, CA passed away on July 9, 2019. He was 88.

Harry was born on October 4, 1930 in Cairo, Egypt to Lucine and Ludere Guzelimian. He was raised in the Armenian Evangelical Congregational Church and attended the Kaloustian and Mekhitarian Armenian Elementary Schools, Junior High Coptic Egyptian School and the American Lincoln High School followed by two years at the American University of Cairo.

He arrived in the United States in the fall of 1952 to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, NY, where he studied Engineering and majored in Building Construction. He graduated with a BS in 1955. He then attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, MA on a Research Assistant Internship Program, majoring in Building Engineering and Construction and graduated with an MS degree in 1958. During his college years, he was active in various sports, track and field, and the theater, as well as being a member of the Armenian Students Association (ASA).

Upon graduation he worked as a structural engineer at Stone & Webster Engineering & Construction Company in Boston, MA. In 1959 he transferred to the Kuljian Corporation in Philadelphia, PA as a structural engineer.

He met Alice Z. Gulasarian from Philadelphia, PA at an ASA party and they were married in 1960. In Philadelphia they attended the Armenian Congregational Church. They were blessed with two daughters, Nadya and Melina. In 1964, his family moved to San Diego, CA, where Harry started working as a structural engineer at General Atomic Company. There he designed the structural skeleton of the Power Plant Building for the first prototype of a nuclear reactor, known as the HTGR, the High Temperature Gas-Cooled Reactor, for the Public Service of Colorado. In 1969 Harry changed from his engineering career to a career in real estate.

Harry was an active member of the San Diego Chapter of the Triple X Fraternity since 1977. He attended the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church where the Pastor was Deran Yalian of Fresno, CA until St. John Garabed Armenian Apostolic Church was established, where he attended with his family.

He is survived by his two daughters, Nadya Malconian (Joseph) Malconian, their children Michael and Sara Malconian; and Melina Ounjian (Charles) and their children Paul and Nicolas Ounjian, along with his two sisters Anahid Balian of Montreal, Canada and Hermine Nazarian of Loundonville, NY.

Memorial donations may be sent to the AMAA for Elia Y. Levonian Endowment Fund. □



Garabed Haitayan

Garabed Haitayan of Glendale, CA passed away on June 22, 2019. He was 89.

Born on January 19, 1930 in Alexandrette, Iskenderun to parents Panos and Mariam, he was the third and only son of four children. His three sisters were Nver, Arax and Hayganoush. As a result of the evacuation of Alexandrette, the Haitayans settled in Beirut, Lebanon.

For his elementary education Garabed attended the Armenian Evangelical Gertmenian School of Mar-Mekhael Region, and for his secondary education the Armenian Evangelical Central High School of Ashrafieh Region, both in Beirut, Lebanon.

He worked at the Mensi Factory of Garbis and Nubar Nazarians for 25 years as cutting master of the designing department. It is here that, in his own words, he grew and matured as a man and as a master tailor. For 25 years, Garabed served as the Chairperson of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Bourj Hammoud's Tiro district's chapter.

On May 11, 1957 Garabed married Elise Sepetjian and they were blessed with three children – Maro, Panos and Vazken. Due to the Civil War in Lebanon, the Haitayans moved to CA and settled in Glendale. They attended the Armenian Brotherhood Bible Church of Pasadena, United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles and St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Pasadena.

From an early age, Garabed showed a great love for Armenian spiritual music, especially the sharagans (Armenian liturgy). He also was an exemplary husband, father and grandfather and had a strong faith. The Holy Scripture accompanied him throughout his life. He had a different passion and love for Krikor Naregatsi, the Armenian mystical and lyrical poet, monk and theologian, who was the source of his inspiration. Garabed prepared and published tapes and CDs, where he read Naregatsi and spread God's word.

Due to his knowledge of six languages, he worked for 15 years in the EDD-Employment Development Department and DMV-Department of Motor Vehicles of Los Angeles. Later, with his family members, he was the founder of the Café Santorini Restaurant of Pasadena, inspiring confidence both to his employees and customers. In 1991 he was one of the founders of the Chork Marzban (Duort Yole) Armenian Compatriotic Union.

Garabed and Elise were always surrounded by their family's patriarchal and Armenian traditions. At age 75 he started taking piano lessons and his fingers began to "talk" to the piano keyboard. Just a month ago, on May 19, Garabed enjoyed the college graduation of his granddaughter, surrounded by his family members. The next week



he went to the hospital for check-ups, and due to some complications, he passed away.

A funeral service was held on June 27 at the Old North Church of Hollywood Hills Forest Lawn Cemetery. Memorial donations may be sent to the AMAA designated for the Garabed and Elise Haitayan Endowment Fund for Orphan and Child Care Programs in Armenia. □

Nevdon Hanessian

Nevdon Hanessian of Bloomingdale, NJ (previously from Paramus, NJ) passed away on May 27, 2019. He was 88.

Nevdon was born in Beirut, Lebanon on June 4, 1930, the first of five children born to Avedis and Armaven Hanessian. The Hanessian family were very active in the Armenian Evangelical Church and School of Nor Marash, Bourdj Hammoud. Nevdon grew up acquiring his father's trade of woodworking. He married Sossy Nalbandian on February 4, 1961 and they were blessed with three children, Herag and Maral (born in Beirut) and Vahak (born in NJ). In his 30s Nevdon opened his own factory where he made wooden furniture, doors and windows. In 1970 Nevdon with his family moved to Worcester, MA and for a short while they lived with his uncle, Rev. Herold Hassessian.

In 1972, they moved to New Jersey and became members of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus. Nevdon was a deeply religious man who scarcely missed Sunday church services. He worked as a building contractor until his late 70s when he retired.

Nevdon's funeral service was held on Saturday, June 1 at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus NJ and was officiated by Pastor Dikran Youmshakian. He will be greatly missed by his wife, his children, grandchildren, siblings and friends. □



James (Hagop) Makoulian

James Makoulian of Drexel Hills, PA, passed away on June 18, 2019 at the age of 92.

Born in Jerusalem, Palestine to Asadour and Nectar Makoulian on October 14, 1926, James was the youngest of three children. James and his two older sisters were orphaned at a young age and spent several years at the Armenian Home Orphanage in Shemlan, Lebanon.

At the age of thirteen, James was separated from his sisters and had to take various odd jobs in the region. He eventually moved back to Palestine



and lived there until the partition of Palestine in 1948, when the fighting and lack of work and food forced James to wander as a refugee through Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

James came to the United States in December 1956 knowing two people by name only. He was able to get a job and attended vocational school. After graduating in 1962, James went to work at the University of Pennsylvania in the Physics Department and then, as an invaluable employee at the School of Engineering, retired in 1995. He married Sona Keusseyan in December 1964 and they made their home in Drexel Hill, PA where they raised their three children.

James was very active in the Armenian community. He was a lifelong member of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church where he held many positions of service, including Chairman of the Board of Trustees, member of the Mission Outreach Committee, head of the Coffee Hour, and, on several occasions, Grand Chef. Throughout his life, James was also involved in the Armenian Students' Association, Knar Choral Group, Philadelphia Armenian Theatrical Group, Armenian Cultural Group, American Armenian Society, and the Knights of Vartan, where he was the local branch Commander for one term and received the Man of the Year Award in 2009.

James loved volleyball, tavloo (backgammon), swimming in the ocean, telling jokes, making his famous iced tea, shish kabob (cooking and eating), and most of all, gardening. He was an award-winning vegetable and flower gardener and was featured in the Philadelphia Inquirer and on the local news for his gardening prowess.

He leaves behind his wife Sona, their three children Haig, Tina (Paul), and Sylvia (David), eight grandchildren, Jacob, Juliet, Nicholas, Claire, Audrey, Luke, Samantha and Alexandria, as well as many relatives and friends. □

Dr. Jean Meguerditchian

Dr. Jean-Charles Meguerditchian of Lyon, France passed away on June 2, 2019 at the age of 81.

Born in Valence, France, Dr. Meguerditchian was the son of Sirvart and the late Rev. Dikran Meguerditchian, who had pastored several Armenian Evangelical Churches in France. Dr. Meguerditchian leaves behind a brother Martin and sisters Madeleine and Noyemee. A sister Varta predeceased him.

For more than eight years, Dr. Meguerditchian volunteered his services at the AMAA's Nerses and Arpine Aynilian Medical Clinic in Yerevan, Armenia. Even though he was a cardiologist, people with all



kinds of diseases came to see him from Yerevan and beyond. At times he responded to house call requests in the evenings or on weekends. During his 13-week service each year, Dr. Meguerditchian treated hundreds of patients.

He first came to Armenia very reluctantly at the relentless insistence of his pastor in 2000. He had no desire to go to a former Soviet Union country. However, during his first three-week visit when he treated needy patients in AMAA's Aynilian Clinic, his perspective on Armenia and life itself changed. Dr. Meguerditchian felt very sad when the time of his departure from Armenia approached. He was deeply moved when patients asked him, "Who will take care of us when you are not here?"

The doctor who once reluctantly came to Armenia used to reluctantly leave Armenia. Soon after his first visit to Armenia, Dr. Meguerditchian discovered his life mission was to serve the poor and the needy of Armenia in the name of Christ. The presence of Christ was indeed evident in his loving care for his patients. □

Edward Onanian

Edward Onanian of East Greenwich, RI passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on April 1, 2019. He was 82.

Born in Woonsocket, RI, Edward was the son of the late Takouhi Donabedian Krekorian and John C. Onanian.

Before his retirement, Edward had a lifelong career at the US Department of Labor in Washington, DC focusing on Labor Management Relations. Career highlights included initiating a program for global economic conferences in Paris, France; being part of an official delegation led by the US Secretary of Labor to Israel; and representing the US in the Geneva economic conferences. Edward graduated from Classical High School in 1954, Brown University in 1958 summa cum laude, and earned his doctorate degree in economics from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

Edward was a dedicated and active member of the Armenian Church, serving in many capacities over the course of his life. He was known for his honesty and integrity, keen sense of humor and great wit.

He leaves his wife of 57 years, Zvart Avedisian Onanian, daughters Laurie and Deborah Onanian, son-in-law Eric Stickler, and cherished grandsons, John Edward and Avedis George. He is also survived by his brother, Harry Krekorian, Jr., two brothers and sisters-in-law Edward and Pamela Avedisian and Paul and Esta Avedisian, and many nieces and nephews. He



was predeceased by his brother and sister-in-law, Paramaz and Saranelle Avedisian.

Funeral services were held on April 6 at Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church of Providence, RI with burial at North Burial Ground, Providence, RI. □

Aram Ohannes Sarkissian

Aram Ohannes Sarkissian of Watertown, MA passed away peacefully on June 23, 2019. He was 88 years old.

Aram was born in 1931 in Alexandrette, which was in Syria at the time and is now part of present-day Turkey. He received his elementary education at St. Gregoire School and secondary education at the Armenian Evangelical Central High School, both in the Ashrafieh Region of Beirut, Lebanon. He continued his higher education at the American University of Beirut, where he earned his bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Education. While still a student, he voluntarily contributed regularly to Badanegan Artsagank and Chanaser papers of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE).

In 1961, Aram married Aida Asdghig Topalian and they moved to Nicosia, Cyprus where he taught history and geography at Melkonian School for a year and from 1962-1971 worked at the American Academy in Nicosia as a geography and history teacher.

In 1974, Aram became Principal of the Armenian Evangelical Secondary School of Nor Marash, Bourdj Hammoud, Lebanon and served until 1984. During his tenure at Nor Marash School the student body grew to over 1,000.

From 1984-1990, Aram served as Editor of Chanaser and Badanegan Artsagank papers of UAECNE. During the Civil War in Lebanon until 1991 Aram also served as the General Secretary of the Central Committee of UAECNE. In late 1989, Aram and his family moved to Boston, MA, however, he returned to Beirut for a year to continue his service as Editor of Chanaser and Badanegan Artsagank.

In 1992, Aram moved to CA and served as Principal of Sahag Mesrob School of Pasadena until 1993. From 1994-1999 he worked at Trans World Radio, translating and reading sermons in Armenian for audiences in Europe. At the same time until 2013 he also worked at the Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown as Office Administrator and at Project SAVE, translating various documents.

Aram was an exemplary father and husband. He always used his talents and skills to serve the community, family and church for decades.

Aram is survived by his beloved wife Asdghig, sons Hratch and his wife Lilya of Armenia, Hovig of



Watertown, Ara and his wife Armine of Waltham, and Azad of Watertown. He was the loving grandfather of Aram, Tatevik and Hera Sarkissian and dear brother of Hagop Sarkissian of Watertown and Mary Karaguesian of Watertown, Hovsep Sarkissian and his wife Mathild of Germany and the late Alice Ashjian.

Funeral services were held at the Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown on June 27, followed by interment at Ridgeland Cemetery in Watertown. □

Agnes Kassouni Scribner

Agnes Kassouni Scribner of Willow Street, PA, formerly of Wilmington, DE and Larnaca Cyprus, passed away in her sleep on April 7, 2019 after a long illness. She was 90.



Agnes was born on the Island of Cyprus to Manuel and Martha Kassouni, in the seaside town of Larnaca. Her father was a well-known scholar, mathematics teacher, expert in several languages, and a historian/amateur archeologist. As a young man in Aintab, he was a strong nationalist among his Armenian people during the Genocide. She was the third of four children - sister Nouvart, brother Sarkis, and younger brother Vartkes who is the only surviving sibling. The Armenian Evangelical church and community in Cyprus was "the village" that raised her and instilled in her a strong faith.

Agnes attended the American Junior College in Beirut, Lebanon where at graduation she was offered a teaching position, but instead opted to study at Shelton College in New York City. She continued her education at Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, where she earned a master's degree. She was teaching at the Wilmington Christian School when she met her husband in a church choir. Originally intending to return to Cyprus, she became a United States citizen soon after their engagement.

She loved her church where she served as a Bible teacher and on many church committees and service groups. She sang in small ensembles and in choirs throughout most of her life. Agnes was also an avid tennis player, winning many tournaments first in Cyprus and then at the DuPont Country Club in Wilmington, DE. She was sought after as a tennis partner in the community, and at their summer home in NH.

She leaves behind her husband, Dr. Richard M. Scribner with whom she recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, her two sons, David M. Scribner of Cocoa Beach, FL, and Daniel K. Scribner of Glen Mills, PA, six grandchildren Jessica Schmitz, Daniella and Demi Scribner, and Daniel H. Scribner, Kristen Scribner and Michel Scribner

and two great grandchildren Elizabeth Schmitz and Robert Schmitz.

A memorial service was held at the Willow Valley Community on May 8. Agnes is now with the Lord whom she loved and served diligently. She will be remembered as a humble and gentle woman with a keen mind and strong Christian faith, fully committed to her family and community. □

Աստղիկ Չոլագեան-Ծիրիքեան

Աստղիկ Ծիրիքեան ծնած է Հալէպ 1935-ին, բարեպաշտ եւ հաւատացեալ ընտանեկան յարկի մը տակ: Զաւակն էր Նաժիպ եւ Արուսեակ Ծիրիքեաններու, եւ ամենակրտսերը չորս քոյրերու –Սօֆի, Եւնիկէ, Արփիկէ եւ ինք (Աստղիկ): Իր ծնողքին օրինակով ու առաջնորդութեամբ ան կանուխ տարիքէն առաջնորդուեցաւ եկեղեցի եւ անդամակցեցաւ Հալէպի Հայ Աւետարանական Էմմանուէլ եկեղեցիին, եւ եղաւ եռանդուն ու նուիրուած ջանիցական ու եկեղեցւոյ անդամ: Ան իր նախնական ուսումը ստացաւ Հալէպի Հայ Աւետ. Էմմանուէլ Վարժարանէն ներս եւ շարունակեց Ալէքսիոս Գոլէճ, ուր աւարտեց սոփոմորի կարգը:



1958-ին Ամուսնացաւ Վարդիվառ Չոլագեանի հետ, եւ Աստուած օրհնեց իրենց ընտանիքը չորս զաւակներով –Վիզէն, Լիմի, Հրայր եւ Կասիա – եւ ութը թոռներով:

1969-ին Ընտանիքը փոխադրուեցաւ Պէյրութ, ուր նախ անդամակցեցան Էշրէֆիէի Հայ Աւետարանական եկեղեցիին, եւ ապա Լիբանանի քաղաքացիական պատերազմը սկսելէն ետք, Հայ Աւետարանական Ա. եկեղեցիին: Ան իր ամուսինին հետ ոչ միայն առաջնորդեց, այլ մանաւանդ խօսքով ու կեանքով քաջալերեց իր զաւակներուն որ նուիրուին Աստուծոյ ու եկեղեցիին:

Ան գործօն անդամ մըն էր Հայ Աւետարանական Գոլէճի օժանդակ մարմինին, ինչպէս նաեւ եկեղեցիի Տիկնանց միութեան: Ան երաժշտասէր էր եւ եկեղեցիի աղօթաժողովներուն եւ այլ առիթներով կը նուագէր դաշնամուրը: Կը սիրէր եւ մեն հաճոյքով ներկայ կ'ըլլար դպրոցին (եւ որեւէ դպրոցէն որ հրաւէր ստանար) առաւօտեան պաշտամունքներուն եւ կը ճոխացներ զանոնք իր պատմութիւններով:

Տիկ. Աստղիկի համար, եկեղեցական անպաշտօն ծառայութիւններու ծիրին մէջ կ'իյնային առանձին ապրող ծերերու կանոնաւոր այցելութիւն ընելը եւ Կիրակի

օրերը եկեղեցիի պաշտամունքին նոր դէմքեր ժայտով մը դիմաւորելը:

2010-ին իր ամուսինին մահէն ետք, իր առողջութիւնը հետզհետէ վատթարացաւ, եւ ծառայեց անկողինին:

Ան, իր կեանքի վերջին վեց տարիները անցուց Հայ Ծերերու Տուն (ՔԱՀԼ) եւ վայելեց անոր տնօրէնութեան եւ անձնակազմին հոգատարութիւնը: Այս առիթով Տիկ. Աստղիկի ընտանիքը սրտագին շնորհակալութիւններ կ'ուզէ յայտնել եւ փոխանցել ՔԱՀԼ-ի Տնօրէնին՝ Պատ. Սեպուհ Թերզեանի, եւ ՔԱՀԼ-ի անձնակազմին, ինչպէս նաեւ Տիկ. Աստղիկի հոգատարին ԹՈՄԱՍԱ-յին:

Անցնող աւելի քան երեք տարիներու ընթացքին ան մնաց անշարժ եւ անխօս, բայց իր սիրելիներուն նկատելիօրէն յստակ էր իր դէմքին վրայի ժպիտը, ամէն անգամ որ սիրելի մը մօտենար իրեն, եւ կամ երբ լսէր հոգեւոր երգ մը:

Վերջին շաբթուան ընթացքին անոր առողջութիւնը շատ արագ կերպով վատթարանալէ ետք, իր աչքերը այս աշխարհին առ յաւէտ փակեց եւ միացաւ իր Երկնաւոր Հօր, Կիրակի առաւօտ, 4 Օգոստոս 2019-ին, ՔԱՀԼ-ի մէջ:

«Օրինեալ ըլլայ արդարներուն յիշատակը»: □

Jesus said... "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

* Ohannes Balabanian
Chomedy Laval, QC, Canada

Elizabeth Calian
Los Angeles, CA

Anahid Meymarian
Tarzana, CA

* Irene Poonarian
Oradell, NJ

Harry Tovmassian
North Potomac, MD

* Memorials designated for AMAA

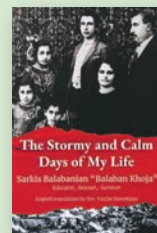
AMAA Bookstore - Featured Books



**Armenian English Diglot
New Testament**
*Western Armenian and
Today's English version.*
Item # 508 - Price \$15.00



**Eastern Armenian Bible
Old and New Testaments**
Ararat Edition 2007 (hc)
Item # 509 - Price: \$20.00



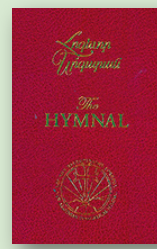
**The Stormy and Calm Days of
my Life**
Educator, Rescuer, Survivor.
**Sarkis Balabanian (Balaban
Khoja)** Translated by Rev. Vatche
Ekmekjian
Item # 406 - Price: \$20.00
All Proceeds go to AMAA
Balabanian Ed. Fund



**A Century of Armenian
Protestantism 1846-1946**
(Second Printing)
*The author recounts the
history of the Armenian
Evangelical movement
from its beginning to 1946.*
By Leon Arpee
Item # 365 - Price: \$20.00



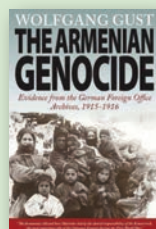
**A History of Armenian
Christianity (Second
Printing)**
*A fairly objective overview
of the Christian pilgrimage
of the Armenian people
throughout the centuries.*
By Leon Arpee
Item # 366 - Price: \$30.00



**The Hymnal (Hokevor
Yerkan)**
Հոգևոր Երգարան
Bilingual Hymns
Item # 353 - Price: \$30.00



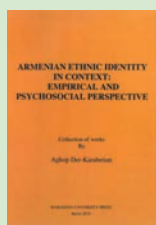
**The Genesis and Early
Development of the
Armenian Missionary
Association of America**
*History of the founding of the
AMAA.*
Item # 403 - Price: \$20.00



The Armenian Genocide
*Evidence from the German
Foreign Office Archives,
1915-1916.*
**Compiled and edited by
Wolfgang Gust**
Item # 349 - Price: \$75.00



The Recipes of Musa Dagh
*An Armenian Cookbook in a
Dialect of its Own.*
**by Alberta, Anna and
Louisa Magzarian**
Item # 364CO - Price: \$19.50



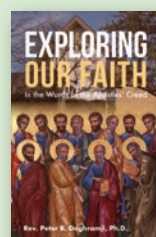
**Armenian Ethnic Identity
in Context: Empirical and
Psychosocial Perspective**
Collections of Works
By Aghop Der-Karabetian
Item # 404CO-HU
Price: \$20.00
All proceeds will go to
Haigazian University.



**The Youth Home of
Istanbul: A Story of the
Remnants' Homecoming.**
By Hrant Guzelian
Item # 357 - Price: \$20.00



**History of the Armenian
Evangelical Churches of
North and South America**
*History of AEUNA churches,
their founders, locations,
pastors, leaders, and programs.*
Published by AEUNA
Item # 401CO - Price: \$10.00



Exploring Our Faith:
*In the Words of the
Apostles' Creed*
**By Rev. Dr. Peter
Doghramji**
Item # 358 - Price: \$10.00



**The Thirsty Enemy
- A Memoir**
*Dr. Markarian's (founding
President of Haigazian Univer-
sity) and his wife's adventur-
ous living in Lebanon during
the Civil War Years.*
By Rev. Dr. John Markarian
Item # 335 - Price: \$15.00

CORRECTIONS

April May June 2019 AMAA News

Page 18 – Author's name should be spelled Kenell Touryan

Page 31 – LARK Concert article last paragraph first line should read "Lark Musical Society Chairman, Andy Torosyan..."

Page 48 – Back Cover photo correct date is August 27, 1895

We apologize for the errors!

For a complete listing of our Bookstore items, please contact AMAA Bookstore Tel. 201.265.2607, or visit www.amaa.org/bookstore

THE ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Invites You...



**TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER
AND BRING CHRISTMAS JOY TO OUR CHILDREN IN**



ARMENIA & ARTSAKH

Even though it's almost Fall, and the weather is still warm, the AMAA and our dedicated volunteers have already begun preparations to bring Christmas Joy to children in Armenia and Artsakh!

Every Christmas, the AMAA's Christmas Joy Program brings many smiles and fun celebrations to thousands of children and their families throughout Armenia and Artsakh. From music and dancing, to Christmas plays and visits from Santa, Christmas is a happy and blessed time of the year. Please join us and be a part of sharing God's love and helping to bring Christmas Joy to our precious children in the Homeland. For some, the toys and gifts may be the only Christmas presents they receive, as their families cannot afford to spend what little income they have on these items.

For as little as \$15 you can help the AMAA continue bringing the spirit and joy of Christmas directly to these children.

YES, I would like to help provide a blessed Christmas for children in need.

ENCLOSED IS MY DONATION OF

☐\$15 ☐\$30 ☐\$45 ☐\$75 ☐\$125 ☐Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel.: _____ E-mail: _____

Make check payable to: Armenian Missionary Association of America, memo: Christmas Joy.

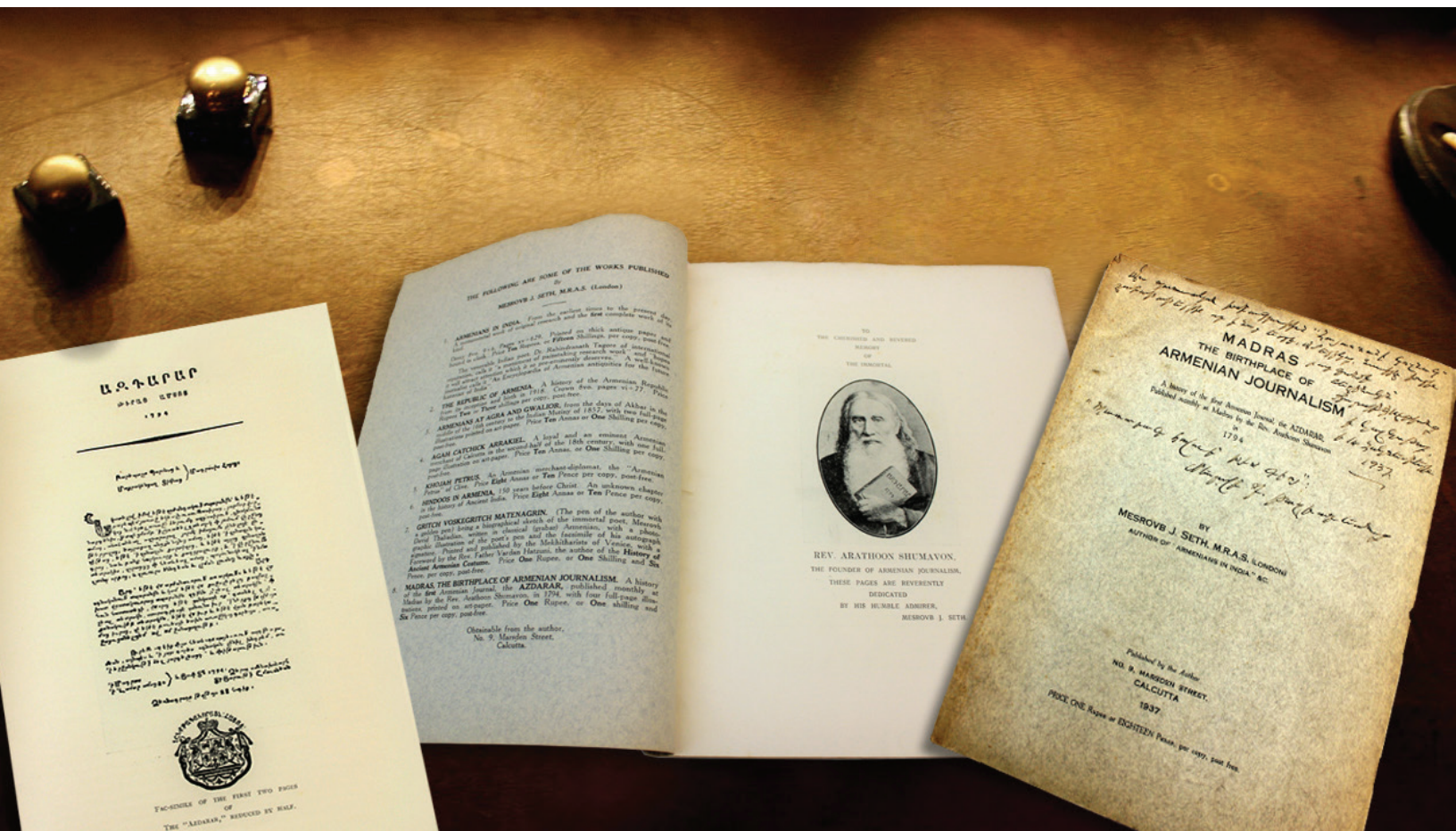
Mail to: 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 or make a secure donation online at www.amaa.org





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Paramus, NJ 07652

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This year is the 225th anniversary of the publication of AZTARAR (ԱԶԴԱՐԱՐ), the first news media publication in the Armenian language. 2019 is declared "The Year of the Armenian Media" by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

Photo Credit: AMAA Library/Archives in Paramus, NJ - Images of pages from the book, *Madras the Birthplace of Armenian Journalism*